

AN
ESSAY
ON THE
PICTURESQUE,
AS COMPARED WITH THE
SUBLIME AND THE BEAUTIFUL;
AND, ON THE
USE OF STUDYING PICTURES,
FOR THE PURPOSE OF
IMPROVING REAL LANDSCAPE,

By UVEDALE PRICE, Esq.

QUAM MULTA VIDENT PICTORES IN UMBRIS, ET
IN EMINENTIA, QUÆ NOS NON VIDEMUS.

Cicero.

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P R E F A C E.

THIS unfinished work (and such I fear it is in every respect) I did not intend publishing till it was more complete, and till I had endeavoured, at least, to render it more worthy the public inspection. I have, however, been induced to send it into the world earlier than I wished, from the general curiosity which my friend Mr. Knight's poem has awakened on the subject.

It would have been more prudent in me not to have afforded the public such an opportunity of judging, how much I am indebted to the effusion of friendship and poetry, for the high compliment he has paid me; were I now to say what I feel about my friend's poem it might appear like a return of compliment; and whatever could

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in any way be so misconstrued, would be equally unworthy of us both.

I cannot however, resist the satisfaction of mentioning one circumstance, highly flattering to me, as it accounts for my not chusing to delay this publication. I had mentioned to Mr. Knight that I had written some papers on the present style of improvement, but that I despaired of ever getting them ready for the press; though I was very anxious that the absurdities of that style should be exposed. Upon this he conceived the idea of a poem on the same subject; and having all his materials arranged in his mind, from that activity and perseverance which so strongly mark his character, he never delayed or abandoned the execution, till the whole was completed. When it was nearly finished, he wrote to me to propose, what I consider as the highest possible compliment, and the strongest mark of confidence in my taste,—that my papers (when properly modelled) should be published

P R E F A C E. v

lished with his poem, in the same manner as Sir Joshua Reynolds's notes were published with Mr. Mason's *Du Fresnoy*.

This proposal, could it have been made at an earlier period, I should have accepted with pride; but my work had then taken too much of a form and character of its own to be incorporated with any thing else; for indeed almost the whole of what I have now published had been written some time before.

I flatter myself, however, that though my plan is totally different from his, and though in some particulars we may not exactly agree, yet the general tendency is so much the same, and our notions of improvement are upon the whole so similar, that my work may, in many points, serve as a commentary upon his; and I cannot wish it a more honourable employment. I have on that account judged it better, that what I had arranged should appear in its present state, now that curiosity is alive, than in a less im-

perfect one when the subject might have become stale. I think also, that in the light of a commentary it may possibly have more effect, when each person publishes his own ideas (tinged as they must always be with the peculiarities of different minds, yet tending to the same general end) than when two works are modelled to agree and coincide with each other.

In the course of printing this work I have been tempted, on numberless occasions, to insert passages from the *Landscape*, as the best and aptest illustrations of what I meant to explain and enforce. I found, however, that so many of them crowded upon me, and with such equal pretensions, that had I once begun I should have reversed my friend's proposal, and his poem would have become a commentary to my prose.

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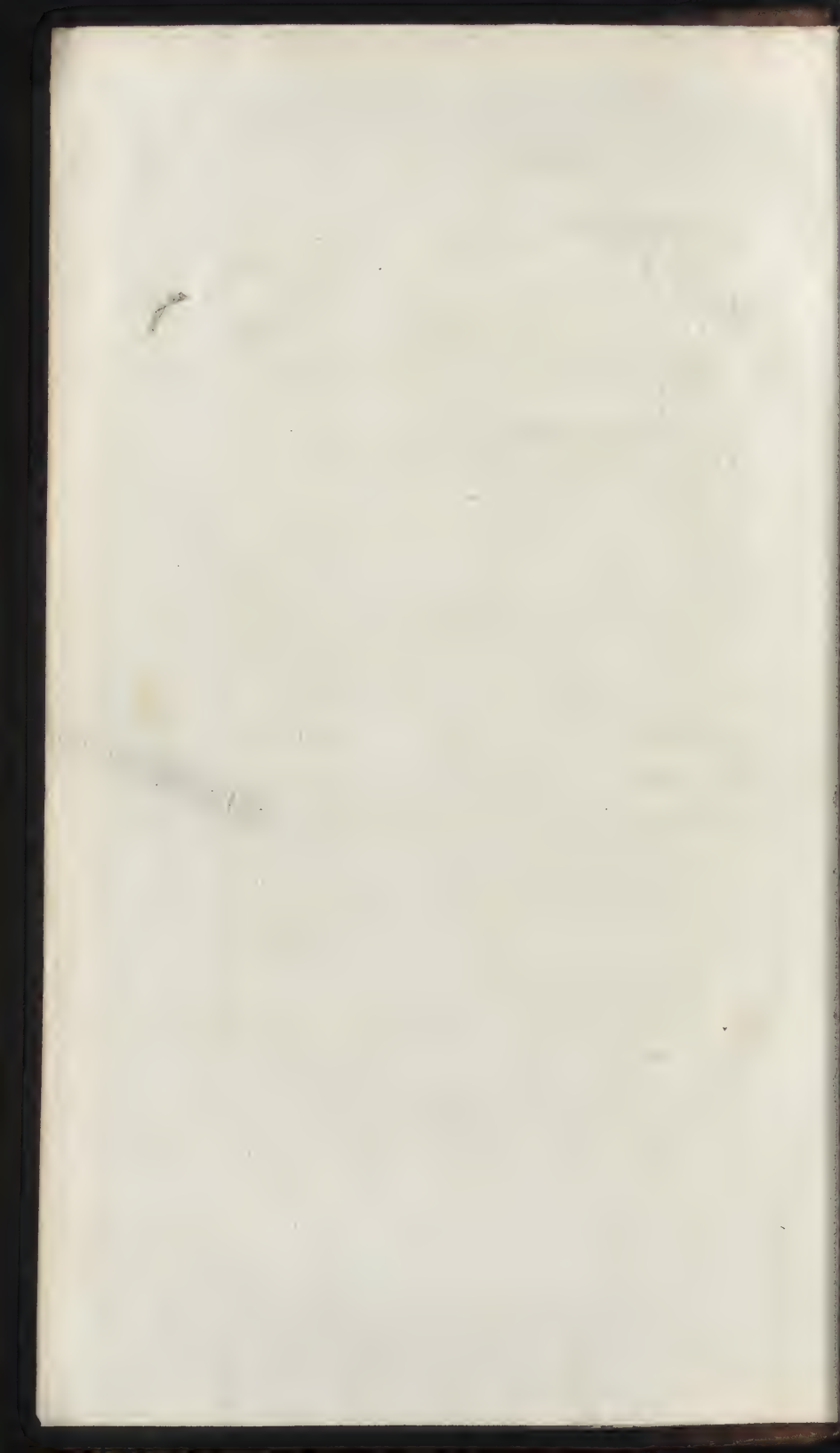
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ON THE
PICTURESQUE, &c.

THERE is no country, I believe (if we except China) where the art of laying out grounds is so much cultivated as it now is in England. Formerly the embellishments of a place were confined to the garden, or a small space near the mansion; while the park, with all its timber and thickets, was left in a state of wealthy neglect: but now these embellishments extend over a whole district; and as they give a new and peculiar character to the general face of the country, it is well worth considering

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sidering whether they give a natural and a beautiful one, and whether the present system of improving (to use a short though often an inaccurate term) is founded on any just principles of taste.

In order to examine this question, the first enquiry will naturally be, whether there is any standard to which works of this sort can be referred; any authority higher than that of the persons who have gained most reputation by those works? I think there is a standard; there are authorities of an infinitely higher kind; the authorities of those great artists who have most diligently studied the beauties of nature, both in their grandest and most general effects, and in their minutest detail; who have observed every variety of form and of colour, have been able to select and combine, and then, by the magic of their art, to fix upon the canvas all these various beauties.

But, however highly I may think of the art of painting, compared with that of
improving,

improving, nothing can be farther from my intention (and I wish to impress it in the strongest manner on the reader's mind) than to recommend the study of pictures in preference to that of nature, much less to the exclusion of it. Whoever studies art alone, will have a narrow pedantic manner of considering all objects, and of referring them solely to the minute and particular purposes of that art to which his attention has been particularly directed; this is what improvers have done: and if every thing is to be referred to art, at least let it be referred to one whose variety, compared to the monotony of what is called improvement, appears infinite, but which again falls as short of the boundless variety of the mistress of all art.

The use, therefore, of studying pictures is not merely to make us acquainted with the combinations and effects that are contained in them, but to guide us by means of those general heads (as they may be called) of composition, in our search of

the numberless and untouched varieties and beauties of nature; for as he who studies art only will have a confined taste, so he who looks at nature only will have a vague and unsettled one; and in this more extended sense I should interpret the Italian proverb, "*Cbi s' insegna, ha un pazzo per maestro* : He is a fool who does not profit by the experience of others."

We are therefore to profit by the experience contained in pictures, but not to content ourselves with that experience only; nor are we to consider even those of the highest class as absolute and infallible standards, but as the best and only ones we have; as compositions, which, like those of the great classical authors, have been consecrated by long uninterrupted admiration, and which therefore have a similar claim to influence our judgment, and to form our taste in all that is within their province. These are the reasons for studying *copies* of nature, though the *original* is before us, that we may not lose

lose the benefit of what is of such great moment in all arts and sciences, the accumulated experience of past ages; and, with respect to the art of improving, we may look upon pictures as a set of experiments of the different ways in which trees, buildings, water, &c. may be disposed, grouped, and accompanied in the most beautiful and striking manner, and in every style, from the most simple and rural to the grandest and most ornamental: many of those objects, that are scarcely marked as they lie scattered over the face of nature, when brought together in the compass of a small space of canvas, are forcibly impressed upon the eye, which by that means learns how to separate, to select, and combine.

Who can doubt whether Shakespeare and Fielding had not infinitely more amusement from society, in all its various views, than common observers? I believe it can be as little doubted, but that the having read such authors must give any man (however

acute his penetration) more enlarged views of human nature in general, as well as a more intimate acquaintance with particular characters, than he would have had from the observation of nature only; that many groupes of characters, many combinations of incidents, which might otherwise have escaped his notice, would forcibly strike him, from the recollection of scenes and passages from such writers; that in all these cases the pleasure we receive from what passes in real life is rendered infinitely more poignant by a resemblance to what we have read or have seen on the stage. But will any man argue from thence that these characters and incidents have no intrinsic merit, but merely that which is derived from their having been made use of by great and admired authors? The parallel between this and the assistance which painting gives towards an accurate as well as a comprehensive view of nature is so obvious as hardly to require pointing out.

I am

I am therefore persuaded that those men's minds will be the most amused (and perhaps not the least usefully employed) to whom "all the world's a stage," who remark wherever they go (and habit will give a rapid and unobserved facility in doing it) not only the characters of all individuals, but their effect on each other. Such an observer will not divide what passes into scenes and chapters, and be pleased with it in proportion as it will do for a novel or a play, but he will be pleased on the same principles as Shakespeare or Fielding would have been. This appears to me a true and exact statement of the mutual relation that painting and nature bear to each other.

Had the art of improving been cultivated for as long a time, and upon as settled principles, as that of painting, and were there extant various works of genius, which, like those of the other art, had stood the test of ages (though from the great change which the growth and decay

of trees must produce in the original design of the artist, this is hardly possible) there would not be the same necessity of referring and comparing the works of reality to those of imitation; but as the case stands at present, the only models that approach to perfection, the only fixed and unchanging selections from the works of nature, united with those of art, are in the pictures and designs of the most eminent masters.

It may be objected, that there are many pleasing circumstances in nature, which, in painting, would appear flat and insipid, as there are others that have a striking effect in a picture, which yet in nature (by a common observer at least) would be unnoticed, or even disliked; but, however true this may be in particular instances, the great leading principles of the one art, as general composition—grouping the separate parts—harmony of tints—unity of character, are equally applicable to the other: I may add also, what is so very essential to the painter, though at first sight it seems hardly

hardly within the province of the improver—breadth and effect of light and shade.

Nothing can be more directly at war with all these principles (founded as they are in truth and in nature) than the present system of laying out grounds. A painter, or whoever views objects with a painter's eye *, looks with indifference, if not with disgust, at the clumps, the belts, the made water, and the eternal smoothness and sameness of a finished place; an improver, on the other hand, considers these as the most perfect embellishments, as the last finishing touches that nature can receive from art; and consequently must think the

* When I speak of a painter, I do not mean merely a professor, but any man (artist or not) of a liberal mind, with a strong feeling for nature as well as art, who has been in the habit of comparing both together.

A man of a narrow mind and little sensibility, in or out of a profession, is always a bad judge; and possibly (as that ingenious critic the Abbé du Bos has well explained) a worse judge for being an artist.

finest

finest composition of Claude (and I mention him as the most ornamented of all the great masters) comparatively rude and imperfect; though he probably might allow, in Mr. Brown's phrase, that it had "capabilities."

No one, I believe, has yet been daring enough to improve a picture of Claude*, or at least to acknowledge it; but I do not think it extravagant to suppose that a man,

* The account in Peregrine Pickle, of the gentleman who had improved Vandyke's portraits of his ancestors, used to strike me as rather *outré*; but I met with a similar instance some years ago, that makes it appear much less so. I was looking at a collection of pictures with Gainsborough; among the rest the housekeeper shewed us a portrait of her master, which she said was by Sir Joshua Reynolds: we both stared, for not only the touch and the colouring, but the whole style of the drapery and the general effect, had no resemblance to his manner. Upon examining the housekeeper more particularly, we discovered that her master had had every thing but the face—not re-touched from the colours having faded—but totally changed, and newly composed, as well as painted, by another, and, I need not add, an inferior hand.

Such a man would have felt as little scruple in making a Claude like his own place, as in making his own portrait like a scare-crow.

thoroughly

thoroughly persuaded, from his own taste, and from the authority of such a writer as Mr. Walpole *, that an art, unknown to every age and climate, that of creating

* I can hardly think it necessary to make any excuse for calling Lord Orford Mr. Walpole; it is the name by which he is best known in the literary world, and to which his writings have given a celebrity much beyond what any hereditary honour can bestow. It is more necessary, perhaps, to make an apology for the liberty I must take of canvassing with freedom many positions in his very ingenious and entertaining treatise on Modern Gardening. That treatise is written in a very high strain of panegyric on the art of which he gives so amusing a history: mine is a direct and undisguised attack upon it. The greater his authority the more necessary it is to combat the impression which that alone will make on most minds. I do it, however, with great deference and reluctance; for I know how difficult it is to steer between the tameness of over-caution and the appearance of acrimony, or of want of respect towards a person for whom I feel so much, and to whom on so many accounts it is due. But he who is warmly engaged in a cause, and has to fight against strongly-rooted opinions, upheld by powerful supporters, must, if he hopes to vanquish them, take every fair advantage of his opponents, and not seem too timid and fearful of giving offence where he means none.



landscapes,

landscapes, had advanced with master-steps to vigorous perfection ; that enough had been done to establish such a school of landscape as cannot be found in the rest of the globe ; and that Milton's description of Paradise seems to have been copied from some piece of modern gardening ;—that such a man, full of enthusiasm for this new art, and with little veneration for that of painting, should chuse to shew the world what Claude might have been, had he had the advantage of seeing the works of Mr. Brown. The only difference he would make between improving a picture and a real scene, would be that of employing a painter instead of a gardener,

What would more immediately strike him would be the total want of that leading feature of all modern improvements, the clump ; and of course he would order several of them to be placed in the most conspicuous spots, with, perhaps, here and there a patch of larches, as forming a strong contrast,

contrast, in shape and colour, to the Scotch firs.—His eye, which had been used to see even the natural groupings of trees in improved places made as separate and clump-like as possible, would be shocked to see those of Claude, some quite surrounded, some half concealed by bushes and thickets; others standing alone, but, by means of those thickets, or of detached trees, connected with other groupings of various sizes and shapes. All this rubbish must be cleared away *, the ground made every where quite smooth and level, and each groupe left upon the grass perfectly distinct and separate.—Having been accustomed to whiten all distant buildings, those of Claude, from the effect of his soft vapoury atmosphere, would appear to him too indistinct; the painter of course would be ordered to give them a smarter appear-

* I do not mean by this, that *nothing* should be cleared; on the contrary, a proper degree and style of clearing adds as much to beauty and effect as it does to neatness. But of this I shall say more hereafter.

ance,

ance, which might possibly be communicated to the nearer buildings also.—Few modern houses or ornamental buildings are so placed among trees, and partially hid by them, as to conceal much of the skill of the architect, or the expence of the possessor; but in Claude, not only ruins, but temples and palaces, are often so mixed with trees, that the tops over-hang their balustrades, and the luxuriant branches shoot between the openings of their magnificent columns and porticos: as he would not suffer his own buildings to be so masked, neither would he those of Claude; and these luxuriant boughs, and all that obstructed a full view of them, the painter would be told to expunge, and carefully to restore the ornaments they had hid.—The last finishing both to places and pictures is water: in Claude it partakes of the general softness and dressed appearance of his scenes, and the accompaniments have, perhaps, less of rudeness, than in any other master;

master * ; yet, compared with those of a piece of made water, or of an improved river, his banks are perfectly savage ; parts of them covered with trees and bushes that hang over the water ; and near the edge of it tufts of rushes, large stones, and stumps ; the ground sometimes smooth, sometimes broken and abrupt, and seldom keeping, for a long space, the same level from the water : no curves that answer each other ; no resemblance, in short, to what he had been used to admire ; a few strokes of the painter's brush would reduce the bank on each side to one level, to one green ; would make curve answer curve, without bush or tree to hinder the eye from enjoying the uniform smoothness

* One of my countrymen at Rome was observing that the water in the Colonna Claude had rather too dressed and artificial an appearance. A Frenchman, who was also looking at the picture, cried out, "Cependant, Monsieur, on pourroit y donner une si belle fête." This was very characteristic of that gay nation, but it is equally so of a number of Claude's pictures. They have an air *de fête* beyond all others ; and there is no painter whose works ought to be so much studied for highly dressed yet varied nature.

and

and verdure, and from pursuing, without interruption, the continued sweep of these serpentine lines;—a little cleaning and polishing of the fore-ground would give the last touches of improvement, and complete the picture.

There is not a person in the smallest degree conversant with painting, who would not, at the same time, be shocked and diverted at the black spots and the white spots,—the naked water,—the naked buildings,—the scattered unconnected groupes of trees, and all the gross and glaring violations of every principle of the art; and yet this, without any exaggeration, is the method in which many scenes, worthy of Claude's pencil, have been improved. Is it then possible to imagine that the beauties of imitation should be so distinct from those of reality, nay, so completely at variance, that what disgraces and makes a picture ridiculous, should become ornamental when applied to nature?

It

CHAPTER II.

IT seems to me, that the neglect, which prevails in the works of modern improvers, of all that is picturesque, is owing to their exclusive attention to high polish and flowing lines, the charms of which they are so engaged in contemplating, as to make them overlook two of the most fruitful sources of human pleasure; the first, that great and universal source of pleasure, variety, whose power is independent of beauty, but without which even beauty itself soon ceases to please; the other, intricacy, a quality which, though distinct from variety, is so connected and blended with it, that the one can hardly exist without the other.

According to the idea I have formed of it, intricacy in landscape might be defined,

C that

that disposition of objects which, by a partial and uncertain concealment, excites and nourishes curiosity*. Variety can hardly require a definition, though, from the practice of many layers-out of ground, one might suppose it did. Upon the whole, it appears to me, that as intricacy in the disposition, and variety in the forms, the tints, and the lights and shadows of objects, are the great characteristics of picturesque scenery; so monotony and baldness are the greatest defects of improved places.

Nothing would place this in so distinct a point of view as a comparison between some familiar scene in its natural and pic-

* Many persons, who take little concern in the intricacy of oaks, beeches, and thorns, may feel the effects of partial concealment in more interesting objects, and may have experienced how differently the passions are moved by an open licentious display of beauties, and by the unguarded disorder which sometimes escapes the care of modesty, and which coquetry so successfully imitates:

Parte appar delle mamme acerbe & crude,
 Parte altrui ne ricuopre invida veste;
 Invida sì, ma se agli occhi il varco chiude,
 L'amoroso pensier già non s'arresta.

turefque,

turesque, and in what would be its improved state, according to the present principles of gardening. All painters, who have imitated the more confined scenes of nature, have been fond of making studies from old neglected bye roads and hollow ways ; and, perhaps, there are few spots that, in so small a compass, have a greater variety of that sort of beauty called picturesque ; but, I believe, the instances are very rare of painters, who have turned out volunteers into a gentleman's walk or drive, either when made between artificial banks, or when the natural fides or banks have been improved. I shall endeavour to examine from whence it happens, that a picturesque eye looks coldly on what is very generally admired, and discovers a thousand interesting objects where a common eye sees nothing but ruts and rubbish ; and whether the pleasure of the one, and the indifference of the other, arise from the causes I have assigned.

Perhaps, what is most immediately striking in a lane of this kind is its intricacy ;

any winding road, indeed (especially where there are banks) must necessarily have some degree of intricacy ; but in a dressed lane every effort of art seems directed against that disposition of the ground ; the sides are so regularly sloped, so regularly planted, and the space (when there is any) between them and the road so uniformly levelled ; the sweeps of the road so plainly artificial, the verges of grass that bound it so nicely edged ; the whole, in short, has such an appearance of having been made by a receipt, that curiosity, that most active principle of pleasure, is almost extinguished.

But in these hollow lanes and bye roads all the leading features, and a thousand circumstances of detail, promote the natural intricacy of the ground ; the turns are sudden and unprepared ; the banks sometimes broken and abrupt ; sometimes smooth, and gently but not uniformly sloping ; now wildly over-hung with thickets of trees and bushes ; now loosely skirted with wood ; no regular verge of grass,

no

no cut edges, no distinct lines of separation; all is mixed and blended together, and the * border of the road itself, shaped by the mere tread of passengers and animals, is as unconstrained as the footsteps that formed it: even the tracks of the wheels (for no circumstance is indifferent) contribute to the picturesque effect of the whole; the lines they describe are full of variety; they just mark the way among trees and bushes, while any obstacle, a cluster of low thorns, a furze-bush, a tussock, a large stone, will force the wheels into sudden and intricate turns, at the same time those obstacles themselves, either wholly or partially concealing the former

* It may be observed, that whenever a border, or such a separation of the general covering of the surface (whether grass, moss, heath, &c.) as discovers the soil, is formed by the action of water, of frost, or by the tread of animals, it is free from that edginess, that cutting liny appearance, the spade always leaves, and which of all things is most destructive of variety and intricacy: this, I think, accounts for the attachment of painters to what is called broken ground, and to the natural banks of rivers, as well as for their contempt for those of artificial water.

ones, add to that variety and intricacy: often a group of trees, or a thicket, will occasion the road to separate in two parts, leaving a sort of island in the middle, and of * these and numberless other accidents painters have continually availed themselves.

It is a singular circumstance, that some of the most striking varieties of form, of colour, and of light and shade, should, in these, as in many other scenes, be owing to the indiscriminate hacking of the peasant, nay, to the very decay that is occasioned by it. When opposed to the tameness of the poor pinioned trees of a gentleman's plantation drawn up strait and even together, there is often a sort of spirit and animation in the manner in which old

* In forests it is inconceivable how much the various routes, in all directions, through the wild thickets, and among the trunks of old trees, add to the intricacy and perplexed appearance of the scenery; an effect that would be totally destroyed if the tracks were all smoothed and made level, and a gravel road, with easy sweeps, made in their room.

neglected

neglected pollards stretch out their immense limbs quite across one of these hollow roads, and in every wild and irregular direction: on some the large knots and protuberances add to the ruggedness of their twisted trunks; in others, the deep hollow of the inside, the mosses on the bark, the rich yellow of the touchwood, with the blackness of the more decayed substance, afford such variety of tints, of brilliant and mellow lights, with deep and peculiar shades, as the finest timber tree (however beautiful in other respects) with all its health and vigour, cannot exhibit.

This careless method of cutting, just as the farmer happened to want a few stakes or poles, gives infinite variety to the general outline of the banks: near to one of these “unwedgeable and gnarled oaks” often rises the slender elegant form of a young beech, ash, or birch, that had escaped the axe, and whose tender bark and light foliage appear still more deli-

cate and airy when seen sideways against the rough bark and massy head of the oak. Sometimes it rises alone from the bank; sometimes from amidst a cluster of rich hollies or wild junipers; sometimes its light and upright stem is embraced by the projecting cedar-like boughs of the yew.

The ground itself, in these lanes, is as much varied in form, tint, and light and shade, as the plants that grow upon it; this, as usual, instead of owing any thing to art, is, on the contrary, occasioned by accident and neglect. The winter torrents, in some places wash down the mould from the upper grounds, and form projections of various shapes, which, from the fatness of the soil, are generally enriched with the most luxuriant vegetation; in other parts, they tear the banks into deep hollows, discovering the different *

* Mr. Gilpin, in his *Observations on the River Wye* (page 21.) has, with his usual accuracy, described the variety of broken ground, and of the colours of the different strata.

strata of earth, and the shaggy roots of trees ; these hollows are frequently overgrown with wild roses, with honeysuckles, periwinkles, and other trailing plants, whose flowers and pendent branches have quite a different effect when hanging loosely over one of these recesses, opposed to its deep shade, and mixed with the fantastic roots of trees, and the varied tints of the soil, from those that are cut into bushes, or crawl along the uniform slope of a mowed or dug shrubbery. In the summer time these little caverns afford a cool retreat for the sheep ; and it is difficult to imagine a more beautiful foreground than is formed by the different groupes of them in one of these lanes ; some feeding on the patches of turf that in the wider parts lye between the fern and the bushes ; some lying in the niches they have worn in the banks among the roots of trees, and to which they have made many side-long paths ; some reposing in these deep recesses, their bowers

O'er canopied with luscious eglantine,

Near

Near the house picturesque beauty must, in many cases, be sacrificed to neatness; but it is a sacrifice, and should not wantonly be made. A gravel walk cannot have the playful variety of a bye road; there must be a border to the gravel, and that and the sweeps must, in great measure, be regular, and consequently formal: I am convinced, however, that many of the circumstances, which give variety and spirit to a wild spot, might be successfully imitated in a dressed place; but it must be done by attending to the principles, not by copying the particulars. It is not necessary to model a gravel walk, or drive after a sheep track or a cart rut, though very useful hints may be taken from them both; and without having water-docks or thistles before one's door, their effect, in a painter's foreground, may be produced by plants that are considered as ornamental. I am equally persuaded that a dressed appearance might be given to one of these lanes, without destroying their peculiar and characteristic beauties.

I have said little of the superior variety and effect of light and shade in scenes of this kind, as that of course must follow variety of forms and of masses, and intricacy of disposition: I wished to avoid all detail that did not appear to me necessary to explain or illustrate some general principles; but when general principles are put crudely without examples, they are not only dry, but obscure, and make no impression.

There are several ways in which a spot of this kind, near a gentleman's place, would probably be improved; for even in the monotony of what is called improvement there is a variety of bad. Some, perhaps, would cut down the old pollards, clear the rubbish, and leave only the maiden trees standing; some might plant up the whole; others grub up every thing, and make a shrubbery on each side; others put clumps of shrubs, or of firs; but there is one improvement that I am afraid almost all who had not been used to look
at

at objects with a painter's eye would adopt, and which alone would entirely destroy its character; that is smoothing and * levelling the ground: the moment this mechanical common-place operation (by which Mr. Brown and his followers have gained so much credit) is begun, adieu to

* To level, in a very usual sense of the word, means to take away all distinctions; a principle that, when made general, and brought into action by any determined improver, either of grounds or governments, occasions such mischiefs as time slowly, if ever, repairs, and which are hardly more dreaded by monarchs than painters.

A good landscape is that in which all the parts are free and unconstrained, but in which, though some are prominent and highly illuminated, and others in shade and retirement; some rough, and others more smooth and polished, yet they are all necessary to the beauty, energy, effect, and harmony of the whole. I do not see how a good government can be more exactly defined; and as this definition suits every style of landscape, from the plainest and simplest to the most splendid and complicated, and excludes nothing but tameness and confusion, so it equally suits all free governments, and only excludes anarchy and despotism. It must be always remembered however, that despotism is the most complete leveller; and he who clears and levels every thing round his own lofty mansion, seems to me to have very Turkish principles of improvement.

all that the painter admires—to all intricacies—to all the beautiful varieties of form, tint, and light and shade; every deep recess—every bold projection—the fantastic roots of trees—the winding paths of sheep—all must go; in a few hours, the rash hand of false taste completely demolishes what time only, and a thousand lucky accidents, can mature, so as to become the admiration and study of a Ruysdal or a Gainsborough, and reduces it to such a thing as an Oilman in Thames-street may at any time contract for by the yard at Islington or Mile-End.

I had lately an opportunity of observing the progress of improvement in one lane, and the effect of it in another, both unfortunately bordering on gentlemen's pleasure grounds. The first had on one side a high bank full of the beauties I have described; I was particularly struck with a beech which stood single on one part of it, and with the effect and character that its spreading roots gave, both to the bank
and

and to the tree itself *: the sheep also had made their sidelong paths to this spot, and often lay in the little compartments between the roots. One day I found a great many labourers wheeling mould to this place; by degrees they filled up all inequalities, and completely covered the roots and pathways; one should have supposed they were working for my Uncle Toby, under the direction of Corporal Trim †, for they had converted this varied bank

* There is something wonderfully picturesque and characteristic in the large roots of trees, and in none more than in those of the beech; they seem to fasten on the earth with their dragon claws; a huge oak too, whose spurs strongly divide from the trunk, shews what are the rivets that enable him to defy the tempest, et quanta radice ad Tartara tendit.

When these roots and spurs are moulded up, from that prevailing fashion of making every thing smooth and level, the tree looks like an enormous post stuck in the ground.

† These worthy pioneers, their employment, and their employers, are very aptly described in two verses of Tasso, and especially if the word *guastatori* ‡ is taken in its most obvious sense :

Inanzi i guastatori avea mandati
Ivuoti luoghi empir', & spianar gli erti.

‡ Spoilers.

This

bank into a perfect glacis, only the gazons were omitted. They had however worked up the mould they had wheeled into a sort of a mortar, and had laid it as smooth from top to bottom as a mason could have done with his trowel. From the number of men employed, the quantity of earth wheeled, and the nicety with which this operation was performed, I am persuaded it was in a great measure done for the sake of beauty.

The improved part of the other lane I never saw in its original state, but by what remains untouched, and by the accounts I heard, it must have afforded noble studies for a painter. The banks are higher and the

This is a most complete receipt for spoiling a picturesque spot; and one might suppose, from this military style having been so generally adopted, and every thing laid open, that our improvers are fearful of an enemy being in ambuscade among the bushes of a gravel pit, or lurking in some intricate groupe of trees. In that respect, it must be owned, the clump has infinite merit; for, besides its compact foldier-like appearance, it may be commanded from every point, and the enemy easily dislodged.

trees

trees are larger than in the other lane, and their branches, stretching from side to side,

“ High over arch’d imbower.”

I heard a vast deal from the gardener of the place near it, about the large ugly roots that appeared above ground, the large holes the sheep used to lie in, and the rubbish of all kinds that used to grow about them. The last possessor took care to fill up and clean, as far as his property went; and that every thing might look regular, he put, as a boundary to the road, a row of white pales at the foot of the bank on each side, and on that next his house he raised a peat wall as upright as it could well stand, by way of a facing to the old bank, and in the middle of this peat wall planted a row of laurels: these laurels the gardener used to cut quite flat at top, and the cattle, reaching over the pales, and browsing the lower shoots within their bite, kept it as even at bottom, so that it formed one projecting lump in the middle, and had just as picturesque an appearance as a bushy wig squeezed between the hat and the cape.

I should

I should add, that these two specimens of dressed lanes are not in a distant county, but within thirty miles of London, and in a district full of expensive embellishments.

I am afraid many of my readers will think that I have been a long while getting through these lanes, but in them, and in old neglected quarries, and in chalk and gravel pits, a great deal of what constitutes, and what destroys picturesque beauty, is strongly exemplified within a small compass, and in spots easily resorted to; the causes too are as clearly marked, and may be as successfully studied as where the higher styles of it (often mixed with the sublime) are displayed among forests, rocks, and mountains.

CHAPTER III.

THERE are few words whose meaning has been less accurately determined than that of the word Picturesque.

In general, I believe, it is applied to every object, and every kind of scenery, which has been, or might be represented with good effect in painting, and that without any exclusion. But, considered as a separate character, it has never yet been accurately distinguished from the sublime and the beautiful; though as no one has ever pretended that they are synonymous, (for it is sometimes used in contradistinction to them) such a distinction must exist.

Mr. Gilpin, from whose very ingenious and extensive observations on this subject I have received great pleasure and instruction,

tion, has given his sanction to this common idea, by defining picturesque objects to be those " which please from some quality capable of being illustrated in painting*," or, as he again defines it in his Letter to Sir Joshua Reynolds " such objects " as are proper subjects for painting†." Both these definitions seem to me (what may perhaps appear a contradiction) at once too vague and too confined; for though we are not to expect any definition to be so accurate and comprehensive, as both to supply the place and stand the test of investigation, yet if it does not in some degree separate the thing defined from all others, it differs little from any general truth on the same subject. For instance, it is very true, that picturesque objects do please from some quality capable of being illustrated in painting; but so also does every object that is represented in painting if it pleases at all, otherwise it would not have

* Essay on Picturesque Beauty, page 1.

† End of Essay on Picturesque Beauty, page 36.

been painted; and from hence we ought to conclude (what certainly is not meant) that all objects which please in pictures are therefore picturesque, for no distinction or exclusion is made. Were any other person to define picturesque objects to be those which please from some striking effect of form, colour, or light and shadow, such a definition would indeed give but a very indistinct idea of the thing defined; but, though hardly more vague than the others, it would be much less confined, for it would not have an exclusive reference to art.

I hope to shew, in the course of this work, that the picturesque has a character not less separate and distinct than either the sublime or the beautiful, nor less independent of the art of painting. It has indeed been pointed out and illustrated by that art, and is one of its most striking ornaments; but has not beauty been pointed out and illustrated by that art also?

Si Venerem Cous nunquam posuisset Apelles
 Merfa sub æquoreis illa lateret aquis.

Examine the forms of those painters who lived before the age of Raphael, or in a country where the study of the antique (operating as it did at Rome on minds highly prepared for its influence) had not yet taught them to separate what is beautiful from the general mass; we might almost conclude that beauty did not then exist; yet those painters were capable of exact imitation, but not of selection. Examine *grandeur* of form in the same manner; look at the dry meagre forms of A. Durer (a man of genius even in Raphael's estimation) of P. Perugino, A. Mantegna, &c. and compare them with those of M. Angelo and Raphael: Nature was not more dry and meagre in Germany or Perugia than at Rome.—Compare the landscapes and back grounds of such artists with those of Titian; Nature was not changed, but a mind of a higher cast, and instructed by the experience of all who went before,

D 3 rejected

rejected minute detail, and pointed out, by means of such selections and such combinations, as were congenial to its own sublime conceptions, in what forms, in what colours, and in what effects, grandeur in landscape consisted. Can it then be doubted but that grandeur and beauty have been pointed out and illustrated by painting as well as picturesqueness*? Yet, would it be a just definition of sublime or of beautiful objects to say, that they were such (and, let the words be taken in their most liberal construction) as pleased from some quality capable of being illustrated in painting, or that were proper subjects for that art? The ancients, indeed, not only referred beauty of *form* to painting, but even beauty of *colour*; and the poet who could describe his mistress's complexion, by comparing it to the tints of Apelles's pictures, must

* I have ventured to make use of this word, which I believe does not occur in any writer, from what appeared to me the necessity of having some one word to oppose to beauty and sublimity, in a work where they are so often compared.

have

have thought that beauty of every kind was highly illustrated by the art he referred to.

The principles of those two leading characters in nature, the sublime and the beautiful, have been fully illustrated and discriminated by a great master; but even when I first read that most original work, I felt that there were numberless objects which give great delight to the eye, and yet differ as widely from the beautiful as from the sublime. The reflections I have since been led to make have convinced me that these objects form a distinct class, and belong to what may properly be called the picturesque.

That term (as we may judge from its etymology) is applied only to objects of sight, and that indeed in so confined a manner as to be supposed merely to have a reference to the art from which it is named. I am well convinced, however, that the name and reference only are limited and uncertain, and that the qualities which

make objects picturesque are not only as distinct as those which make them beautiful or sublime, but are equally extended to all our sensations, by whatever organs they are received; and that music (though it appears like a solecism) may be as truly picturesque, according to the general principles of picturesqueness, as it may be beautiful or sublime, according to those of beauty or sublimity.

There is, indeed, a general harmony and correspondence in all our sensations when they arise from similar causes, though they affect us by means of different senses; and these causes (as Mr. Burke has admirably explained*) can never be so clearly ascertained when we confine our observations to one sense only.

I must here observe (and I wish the reader to keep it in his mind) that the enquiry is not in what sense certain words are used in the best authors, still less what is their common and vulgar use and abuse;

* Sublime and Beautiful, page 236.

but

but whether there are certain qualities which uniformly produce the same effects in all visible objects, and, according to the same analogy, in objects of hearing and of all the other senses ; and which qualities (though frequently blended and united with others in the same object or set of objects) may be separated from them, and assigned to the class to which they belong.

If it can be shewn that a character composed of these qualities, and distinct from all others, does prevail through all nature ; if it can be traced in the different objects of art and of nature, and appears consistent throughout, it surely deserves a distinct title ; but with respect to the real ground of enquiry, it matters little whether such a character, or the set of objects belonging to it, is called beautiful, sublime, or picturesque, or by any other name, or by no name at all.

Beauty is so much the most enchanting and popular quality, that it is often applied

plied as the highest commendation to whatever gives us pleasure, or raises our admiration, be the cause what it will. Mr. Burke has pointed out many instances of these ill-judged applications, and of the confusion of ideas that result from them ; but there is nothing more ill-judged, or more likely to create confusion (if we agree with Mr. Burke in his idea of beauty) than the joining of it to the picturesque, and calling the character by the title of Picturesque Beauty *.

In

* Great part of what follows was written before I saw Mr. Gilpin's Essay on Picturesque Beauty. I had gained so much information on that subject from his other works, that I read it with great eagerness, on account of the interest I took in the subject itself, as well as from my opinion of the author. At first I thought my work had been anticipated ; I was pleased however to find some of my ideas confirmed, and was in hopes of seeing many new lights struck out ; but as I advanced, that distinction between the two characters, that line of separation which I thought would have been accurately marked out, became less and less visible, till at length the beautiful and the picturesque were more than ever mixed and incorporated together, the whole

In reality, the picturesque not only differs from the beautiful in those qualities Mr. Burke has so justly ascribed to it, but arises from qualities the most diametrically opposite.

According to Mr. Burke, one of the most essential qualities of beauty is smoothness; now, as the perfection of smoothness is absolute equality and uniformity of surface, wherever that prevails there can be but little variety or intricacy; as, for instance, in smooth level banks, on a small, or in naked downs, on a large scale. Another essential quality of beauty is gradual variation; that is (to make use of Mr. Burke's expression) where the lines do

whole subject involved in doubt and obscurity, and a sort of anathema denounced against any one who should try to clear it up. Had I not advanced too far to think of retreating, I might possibly have been deterred by so absolute a veto from such authority; but I hope I shall not be thought presumptuous for having still continued my researches, though so diligent and acute an observer had given up the enquiry himself, and pronounced it hopeless.



not

not vary in a sudden and broken manner, and where there is no sudden protuberance. It requires but little reflection to perceive, that the exclusion of all but flowing lines cannot promote variety ; and that sudden protuberances, and lines that cross each other in a sudden and broken manner, are among the most fruitful causes of intricacy.

I am therefore persuaded, that the two opposite qualities of roughness*, and of sudden

* I have followed Mr. Gilpin's example in using roughness as a general term ; he observes, however, that, " properly speaking, roughness relates only to the surface of bodies ; and that when we speak of their delineation we use the word ruggedness." In making roughness (in this general sense) a very principal distinction between the beautiful and the picturesque, I believe I am supported by the general opinion of all who have considered the subject, as well as by Mr. Gilpin's authority. That authority is deservedly so high, that where in other points I have the misfortune to differ from him, his opinion will of course be preferred to mine, unless I can clearly shew that it is ill founded : I must therefore endeavour to shew in what respects it is ill-founded, as often as these points occur, and with the

sudden variation, joined to that of irregularity, are the most efficient causes of the picturesque.

This, I think, will appear very clearly, if we take a view of those objects, both natural and artificial, that are allowed to

the best of my abilities; for any thing short of victory is in this case a defeat.

I will first mention, in general, the difficulties into which so ingenious a writer has been led from losing sight of that genuine and universal distinction between the beautiful and the picturesque, which he himself had begun by establishing, and which separates their characters equally in nature and in art, and from confining himself to that unsatisfactory notion of a mere general reference to art only.

He has given it as his opinion, that "roughness forms the most essential point of difference between the beautiful and the picturesque, and seems to be that particular quality which makes objects chiefly please in painting." He therefore has thought it necessary, in some instances, to exclude smooth objects from painting, and to shew, in others, that what is smooth in reality is rough in appearance; so that when we fancy ourselves admiring the smoothness, we think we perceive (as in a calm lake) we are in fact admiring the roughness we have not observed. Of this I shall give instances in those places where they will most naturally present themselves.

be picturesque, and compare them with those which are as generally allowed to be beautiful.

A temple or palace of Grecian architecture in its perfect entire state, and its surface and colour smooth and even, either in painting or reality, is beautiful ; in ruin it is picturesque *. Observe the process

* Mr. Gilpin observes, that “ a piece of Palladian architecture (which, I presume, is only another term for regular Grecian architecture) may be elegant in the last degree ; the proportion of its parts, the propriety of its ornaments, the symmetry of the whole, may be highly pleasing ; but, if we introduce it in a picture, it immediately *becomes* a formal object, and ceases to please.” He adds, “ should we wish to give it picturesque beauty, we must, from a smooth building, turn it into a rough ruin.”

Mr. Gilpin's first point was, to shew that a building, to be picturesque, must neither be smooth nor regular ; and so far we agree. But then, to shew how much picturesque beauty (to use his expression) is preferred by painters to all other beauty, nay, how unfit beauty alone is for a picture, he makes the two assertions I have quoted, viz. that a piece of regular and finished architecture becomes a formal object, and ceases to please when introduced in a picture ; and that

process by which time (the great author of such changes) converts a beautiful object

no painter, who had his choice, would hesitate a moment between that and a ruin.

Were this really the case, we must give up Claude as a landscape painter; for he not only has introduced a number of perfect, regular, and smooth pieces of architecture into his pictures, but they frequently occupy the most conspicuous parts of them; and I doubt whether he may not have painted more entire buildings, as *principal* objects, than he has ruins, though many more of the latter as *subordinate* ones.

Claude delighted in representing scenes of festive pomp and magnificence, as well as of pastoral life and retirement; but if we suppose his temples abandoned, his palaces deserted and in ruins, the whole character of those splendid compositions, which have so much contributed to raise him above the level of a mere landscape painter, would be destroyed. Mr. Gilpin cannot but remember that beautiful sea-port of his which did belong to Mr. Lock, and which (could pictures chuse their own possessors) would never have left him. He must have observed, that the piece of architecture on the left hand was regular, perfect, and as smooth as such a finished building appears in nature.

But with regard to entire buildings, in contradistinction to ruins, the back grounds and landscapes of all the great masters, and particularly of N. and G. Poussin, are full of them, and the ruins few in proportion; so much so, that in the numerous set of Gaspars, published by

ject into a picturesque one. First, by means of weather stains, partial incrusta-

by Vivares, there are scarce any ruins to be found among numberless entire buildings.

No painter more diligently studied picturesque disposition and effect than Paul Veronese; yet architecture of the most regular and finished kind forms a very essential part of his magnificent compositions. Many of these splendid edifices have so truly beautiful an appearance in pictures, especially when they are accompanied (as in Claude's) by trees of elegant forms, and by a scenery, each part of which accords with their character, that one might reverse Mr. Gilpin's position, and, I believe, with more truth assert, that a piece of Palladian architecture, however elegant, however well proportioned its parts, however well disposed and selected its ornaments, how perfect soever the symmetry of the whole, yet, in the mere elevation, or placed (as it frequently is in reality) in a street with other buildings, or at the top of a lawn, naked and unaccompanied, is a formal object, and excites only a cold admiration of the architect's ability; but, when introduced in a picture, becomes a highly interesting object, and universally pleases. I of course mean introduced as the best masters have introduced and accompanied such buildings, for there can be no doubt of the natural tendency of all regular architecture to formality.

The skill with which that formality has been avoided by the great painters, without destroying the smoothness or symmetry, is, perhaps, one of the strongest arguments for studying their works for the purposes of improvement.

tions,

tions, mosses, &c. it at the same time takes off from the uniformity of its surface and of its colour; that is, gives it a degree of roughness, and variety of tint. Next, the various accidents of weather loosen the stones themselves; they tumble in irregular masses upon what was perhaps smooth turf or pavement, or nicely trimmed walks and shrubberies, now mixed and overgrown with wild plants and creepers, that crawl over and shoot among the fallen ruins. Sedums, wall-flowers, and other vegetables that bear drought, find nourishment in the decayed cement from which the stones have been detached: Birds convey their food into the chinks, and yew, elder, and other berried plants project from the sides, while the ivy mantles over other parts, and crowns the top. The even regular lines of the doors and windows are broken, and, through their ivy-fringed openings is displayed, in a more broken and picturesque manner, that striking image in Virgil:

E

Apparet

Apparet domus intus, & atria longa pateſcunt;
 Apparent Priami & veterum penetralia regum.

Gothic architecture is generally conſidered as more pictureſque, though leſs beautiful, than Grecian; and, upon the ſame principle that a ruin is more ſo than a new edifice. The firſt thing that ſtrikes the eye in approaching any building is the general outline againſt the ſky (or whatever it may be oppoſed to) and the effect of the openings: in Grecian buildings the general lines of the roof are ſtrait, and even when varied and adorned by a dome or a pediment, the whole has a character of ſymmetry * and regularity.

In

* Symmetry, which in works of art particularly, accords with the beautiful, is in the ſame degree adverſe to the pictureſque, and among the various cauſes of the ſuperior pictureſqueneſs of ruins, compared with entire buildings, the deſtruction of ſymmetry is by no means the leaſt powerful.

I hope it will not be ſuppoſed, that by admiring the pictureſque circumſtances of the Gothic, I mean to undervalue the ſymmetry and beauty of Grecian buildings: whatever comes to us from the Greeks has an irrefiſtible

In Gothic buildings, the outline of the summit presents such a variety of forms, of turrets and pinnacles, some open, some fretted and variously enriched, that even where there is an exact correspondence of parts, it is often disguised by an appearance of splendid confusion and irregularity. In the doors and windows of Gothic churches, the pointed arch has as much variety as any regular figure can well have, the eye too is not so strongly conducted from the top of the one to that of the other, as by the parallel lines of the Grecian; and every person must be struck with the extreme richness and intricacy of some of the principal windows of our cathedrals and ruined abbeys. In these last is displayed the triumph of the picturesque; and its charms to a painter's eye are often so great as to rival those of beauty itself.

ble claim to our admiration; that distinguished people seized on the true points both of beauty and grandeur in all the arts, and their architecture has justly obtained the same high pre-eminence as their sculpture, poetry, and eloquence.

Some people may, perhaps, be unwilling to allow, that in ruins of Grecian and Gothic architecture any considerable part of the spectators pleasure arises from the picturesque circumstances, and may chuse to attribute the whole to what may justly claim a great share in that pleasure, the elegance or grandeur of their forms, the veneration of high antiquity, or the solemnity of religious awe; in a word, to the mixture of the two other characters: but were this true, yet there are many buildings, highly interesting to all who have united the study of art with that of nature, in which beauty and grandeur are equally out of the question; such as hovels, cottages, mills, ragged insides of old barns and stables, &c. whenever they have any marked and peculiar effect of form, tint, or light and shadow. In mills particularly, such is the extreme intricacy of the wheels and the wood work; such the singular variety of forms, and of lights and shadows, of mosses and weather stains
from

from the constant moisture, of plants springing from the rough joints of the stones; such the assemblage of every thing which most conduces to picturesqueness, that even without the addition of water, an old mill has the greatest charm for a painter.

It is owing to the same causes that a building with scaffolding has often a more picturesque appearance than the building itself when the scaffolding is taken away—that old mossy rough hewn park pales of unequal heights are an ornament to landscape, especially when they are partially concealed by thickets; while a neat post and rail, regularly continued round a field, and seen without any interruption, is one of the most unpicturesque, as being one of the most uniform of all boundaries.

But among all the objects of nature, there is none in which roughness and smoothness more strongly mark the distinction between the two characters, than in water. A calm clear lake, with the

ness, as gentle undulation or abruptness prevail*.

Among

* I have here the misfortune of differing from Mr. Gilpin: he says, "† If the lake be spread out on the canvass (and in this case it cannot be different in nature) the *marmoreum æquor*, pure, limpid, smooth as the polished mirror, we acknowledge it to be picturesque." No one, I believe, will be singular enough to deny that a lake in such a state is beautiful; then either the two terms are perfectly synonymous, or the two characters are mixed: in the latter case I must beg leave to quote a passage from Mr. Locke‡, on a different subject indeed, but of general application. "These passions (fear, anger, shame, envy, &c.) are scarce any of them simple and alone, and wholly unmixed with others, though usually, in discourse and contemplation, that carries the name which operates strongest, and appears most in the present state of the mind." Now if smoothness (as Mr. Gilpin acknowledges) is at least a considerable source of beauty; and if roughness (as he does not scruple to assent) is that which forms the most essential point of difference between the beautiful and the picturesque, it surely is rather a contradiction to his own principles to call a lake in its smoothest state picturesque, on account of such interruptions to the absolute smoothness (or rather uniformity) of its surface, as not only accord with beauty, but are often in themselves sources of beauty; such as shades of various kinds, undulations, and reflections.

† Essay on Picturesque Beauty, page 22.

‡ On the Human Understanding, octavo edit, page 208.

Among trees, it is not the smooth young beech, or the fresh and tender ash,

Upon the same grounds that he asserts the smooth lake to be picturesque, so also does he give that character to the high-fed horse with his smooth and shining coat, and upon the same grounds. If however * “a play of muscles appearing through the fineness of the skin, gently swelling and sinking into each other—his being all over lubricus aspidi, with reflections of light continually shifting upon him, and playing into each other,” make an animal picturesque, what then will make him beautiful? The interruption of his smoothness, by a variety of shades and colours (not sudden and strong, but “playing into each other, so that the eye glides up and down among their endless transitions”) certainly will not supply the room of roughness in such a degree as to over-balance the qualities of beauty, and abolish (as in the present instance) the very name.”

It is true, that according to Mr. Gilpin’s two definitions, both the lake and the horse, in their smoothest possible state, are picturesque; but they are no less opposite to that character, according to his more strict and pointed method of defining it, by making roughness the most essential point of difference between that and the beautiful. After so plain and natural a distinction between the two characters, it surely would have been more simple and satisfactory to have named things according to their obvious and prevailing qualities, and to have allowed that painters sometimes preferred beau-

* Essay on Picturesque Beauty, page 22.

tiful,

ash*, but the rugged old oak, or knotty wych elm, that are picturesque; nor is it necessary they should be of great bulk; it is sufficient if they are rough, mossy, with a character of age, and with sudden variations in their forms. The limbs of huge trees, matted by lightning or tempestful, sometimes picturesque, sometimes grand and sublime objects, and sometimes objects where the two or the three characters were equally, or in different degrees, mixed with each other. It is a pity that talents like his, to which we owe so many just and curious remarks, should ever have been employed in trying to reconcile what, in spite of any ingenuity, must appear a contradiction.

* As the young ash (though at any age by no means a popular tree) is a favourite with painters, it must seem inconsistent to those who refer the term to art only, that I should deny it to be picturesque. But as I have before remarked, if all the objects which painters have been fond of representing were therefore to be called picturesque, it would be a term of little distinction. The young ash has every principle of beauty; freshness and delicacy of foliage, smoothness of bark, elegance of form; nor am I surprised that the smooth and elegant Virgil should call the ash the most beautiful tree in the woods; but when its own leaves are changed to the autumnal tint, and when contrasted with ruder or more massive shapes or colours, it becomes part of a picturesque circumstance, without changing its own nature.

pestuous

pestuous winds, are in the highest degree picturesque; but whatever is caused by those dreaded powers of destruction must always have a tincture of the sublime*.

If we next take a view of those animals that are called picturesque, the same qualities will be found to prevail. The ass† is eminently so, much
more

* There is a simile in Ariosto, in which the two characters are finely united :

Quale stordito, et stupido aratore,
Poi ch'è passato il fulmine; si leva
Di là, dove l'altissimo fragore
Presso agli uccisi buoi steso l'aveva;
Che mira senza fronde, et senza onore
Il Pin che da lontan veder soleva
Tal si levo'l Pagano.

Milton seems to have thought of this simile; but the sublimity both of his subject and of his own genius made him reject those picturesque circumstances whose variety while it amuses distracts the mind, and has kept it fixed on a few grand and awful images :

As when heaven's fire
Has scath'd the forest oaks, or mountain pines,
With singed top their stately growth tho' bare
Stands on the blasted heath.

† Mr. Gilpin, in his very ingenious work on forest scenery (from whence I have taken many of these examples of picturesque animals) observes, that among all the
the

more than the horse; and among horses it is the wild forester with his rough coat, his mane and tail ragged and uneven, or the worn out cart-horse with his staring bones. The sleek pampered steed with his high arched crest and flowing mane is frequently represented in painting, but his prevailing character either there or in reality is that of beauty*.

Among

the tribes of animals scarce any one is more ornamental in landscape than the ass. He adds "in what this picturesque beauty consists, whether in his peculiar character, in his strong lines, in his colouring, in the roughness of his coat, or in the mixture of them, would perhaps be difficult to ascertain." It gave me great satisfaction to find my ideas of the causes of the picturesque confirmed by so attentive an observer as Mr. Gilpin, though he speaks doubtingly; and I cannot help flattering myself, that as his authority has confirmed me in my ideas, so by tracing them through a greater variety of objects than his subject led him to consider, I may shew the justness and accuracy of his suppositions. Mr. Gilpin very properly lays a stress on peculiarity of character; that very naturally arises from strong lines and sudden variations. What is perfectly smooth and flowing has proportionably less of peculiar character, and loses in picturesqueness what it may gain in beauty.

* This leads me to consider a part of Mr. Gilpin's Essay on Picturesque Beauty that I own surprised me in the

Among dogs, the Pomeranian and the rough water dog are more picturesque

the author of the last quoted passage as well as of several others in the essay just mentioned, which mark the true character and cause of the picturesque in a masterly manner, and shew how much and how well he had observed. If the criticism I am going to make is just, Mr. Gilpin has, I think, laid himself open to it by his exclusive fondness for the picturesque, and by having carried to excess that position, of roughness being that particular quality which makes objects chiefly please in painting. From his partiality to this doctrine he ridicules the idea of having *beauty* represented in a picture, and addressing himself to the person he supposes to make so unpainter-like a request, he says*, "The art of painting allows you all you wish; you desire to have a beautiful object painted; your horse, for instance, is led out of the stable in all his pampered beauty. The art of painting is ready to accommodate you; you have the beautiful form you admired in nature exactly transferred to canvass. Be then satisfied; the art of painting has given you what you wanted. It is no injury to the beauty of your Arabian if the painter think he could have given the graces of his art more forcibly to your cart horse."

If a person ignorant of the art of painting was to be told, that a painter who wished to give forcibly the *graces* of his art would prefer a cart horse to an Arabian,

* Essay on Picturesque Beauty.

turesque than the smooth spaniel or greyhound; the shaggy goat than the sheep;
and

he would be apt to think there was something very preposterous both in the art and the artist. This will always be the case when, instead of endeavouring to shew the agreement between art and nature, even when they appear most at variance, a mysterious barrier is placed between them to surprize and keep at a distance the uninitiated. To me the fact seems to be what one might naturally suppose; that Rubens, Vandyk, or Wovermans, when they wished to shew the graces of their art, painted beautiful horses; such as the general sense of mankind would call beautiful; gay pampered steeds with fine coats and high in flesh. When they added, as they often did, a greater share of picturesqueness to these beautiful animals, it was not by degrading them to cart horses and beasts of burthen; it was by means of such sudden and spirited action, with such a correspondent and strongly marked exertion of muscles, such wild disorder in the mane, as might heighten the freedom and animation of their character, without injuring the elegance or grandeur of their form. If by giving *forcibly* the graces of his art is to be understood the giving them with powerful impression, I cannot help thinking that Rubens, when he was transferring from nature to the canvass one of these noble animals in all the fulness and luxuriance of beauty, little imagined that he was throwing away his powers, and that any of the rough high-boned cart horses he had placed in scenes with which they accorded, were more striking specimens

and these last are more so when their fleeces are rough and hang loosely than when they are just shorn. No animal indeed is so constantly introduced in landscape as the sheep, but that (as I observed before) does not prove superior picturesqueness; and I imagine, that besides their innocent character, so suited to pastoral scenes, of which they are the natural inhabitants, it arises from their being of a tint at once brilliant and mellow, and which unites happily with all objects, and also from their producing broader masses of light and shadow than any other ani-

mens of the graces of his art. In Wouvermans also, the number of beautiful pampered steeds greatly exceeds that of his rough and picturesque ones.

It would indeed be a wretched degradation of the art, if the horses of Raphael, G. Romano, Polidore, N. Poussin, whose forms they had studied with almost as much attention as those of the human figure, had corrected the defects of common nature from their own exalted ideas of beauty and grandeur, and from those of their great models, the ancient sculptors, and in which they meant to display (and not feebly) the graces of their art, should in that respect not only be rivalled but vanquished by a jade of Berchem or Paul Potter.

mal.

mal. The reverse of this is true with regard to deer; their wild appearance, their lively action, their sudden bounds, the intricacy of their branching horns, are circumstances highly picturesque; their effect in groupes is apt to be meagre and spotty.

Among savage animals, the lion with his shaggy mane is much more picturesque than the lioness, though she is equally an object of terror.

The effects of smoothness or roughness in producing the beautiful or the picturesque is again clearly exemplified in the plumage of birds. Nothing more beautiful than feathers in their smooth state, when the hand or eye glides over them without interruption; nothing more picturesque as detached ornaments, or when ruffled by any accidental circumstance, by any sudden passion in the animal, or when they appear so from their natural arrangement. As all the effects of passion and of strong emotion on the human figure and countenance

countenance are picturesque, such likewise are their effects on the plumage of birds; when inflamed with anger or with desire, the first symptoms appear in their ruffled plumage *. The game cock, when he attacks his rival, raises the feathers of his neck, the purple pheasant his crest, and the peacock, when he feels the return of spring, shews his passion in the same manner,

And every feather shivers with delight.

Many birds have received from nature the same picturesque appearance as in

* In all animals the same causes produce the same kind of effect. The bristles of the wild boar, the quills on the fretful porcupine, are suddenly raised by sudden emotions; and it is curious to observe how all that disturbs inward calm creates a correspondent roughness without.

The first symptoms of the interruption of that state of the mind which so well answers to the beautiful is an interruption of outward smoothness. In man, when inflamed with anger, the eye-brows are contracted, the skin wrinkled; and the most terrible of animals shews the same picturesque-marks of rage and fierceness.

Παν δὲ τ' ἐπισκηνίου καὶ ἐλκεῖσι ὅσπερ καλυπτῶν.

others

others happens only accidentally : such are the birds whose heads and necks are adorned with ruffs, with crests, and with tufts of plumes, not lying smoothly over each other as those of the back, but loosely and irregularly disposed. These are, perhaps, the most striking and attractive of all birds (and it is the same in all other objects) as having that degree of roughness and irregularity which gives a spirit to smoothness and symmetry, and as these last qualities prevail, the result of the whole is justly called beautiful *.

Birds

* Mr. Gilpin thinks the result of plumage (and he makes no exception) is picturesque. The whole passage seems to me another striking instance of his exclusive fondness for that character, and of his unwillingness, on that account, to allow any beauty or merit to smoothness. Indeed, as he supposes the picturesque solely to refer to painting, and that pictures can scarcely admit of any objects which are not of that character, and as he also allows (or rather asserts) that roughness is its distinguishing quality, it became necessary either to allow that an object might be picturesque without being rough, which would contradict his assertion, or to shew that there were other qualities which would render it

Birds of prey have generally more of the picturesque from the angular form of their beaks,

so in spite of its smoothness, or, to use his own expression, would supply the room of roughness.

Speaking of the plumage of birds *, “nothing,” he says, “can be softer, nothing smoother to the touch; yet it certainly is picturesque.” He then observes, “it is not the smoothness of the surface which produces the effect; it is not this we admire; it is the breaking of the colours; it is the bright green or purple, changing perhaps into a rich azure or velvet black; from thence taking a semitint, and so on through all the varieties of colours: or if the colour be not changeable, it is the harmony we admire in these elegant little touches of nature’s pencil.”

It is singular that the colours of birds, and particularly the changeable ones, from which Mr. Burke has taken some of his happiest illustrations of the beautiful, should, by Mr. Gilpin, not only be cited as sources of the picturesque, but as so abounding in that quality as to bestow on smoothness the effect of roughness. He has laid it down as a maxim, that a smooth building must be turned into a rough one, before it can be picturesque; yet, in this instance, a smooth bird may be made so by means of colours, many of which, with their gradations and changes, are universally acknowledged and admired as beautiful.

I cannot help repeating the same question on this

* Essay on Picturesque Beauty, page 23.

beaks, the rough feathers on their legs,
their crooked talons, their colour (on which

I shall

subject as on the preceding one; if beautiful and changeable colours, with their gradations, added to softness and smoothness of plumage, and to the harmony of the elegant little touches of nature's pencil, make birds picturesque, what then are the qualities which make them beautiful?

I have pressed strongly on these points of difference between Mr. Gilpin and me, because I think it very essential to the chief object I have had in view, that of recommending the study of pictures, and of the principles of painting, as the best guide to that of nature, and to the improvement of real landscape. Could it be supposed that for the purpose of his own art a painter would in general prefer a worn-out cart-horse to a beautiful Arabian;—or that such pieces of architecture as were universally admired for their beauty and elegance would, if introduced in a picture, become formal, and cease to please,—no man would be disposed to consult an art which contradicted all his natural feelings: But were he to be informed that painters have always admired and sought for beauty of every kind in animals as well as in the human species (and strange it would be were it otherwise); that they neither reject smoothness nor symmetry, but only the ill-judged and tiresome display of them; that with regard to regular and perfect architecture, it made a principal ornament in pictures of the highest class, but that while its smoothness, symmetry, and regularity were preserved, its formality was avoid-

I shall say more hereafter) as well as from their action and energy; all this counter-balances the general smoothness of the plumage on their backs and wings*, which
they

ed; in short, that the study of painting, far from abridging his pleasures, would open a variety of new sources of amusement, and, without cutting off the old ones, only direct them into better channels—he might be disposed to consult an art which promised many fresh and untasted delights, without forcing him to abandon all he had enjoyed before.

* Pindar's celebrated description of the eagle, which Mr. Gilpin has quoted as equally poetical and picturesque, and which I believe has always been thought so, seems to me to afford a convincing proof how natural it is for all men, when they design to produce a picturesque image, to avoid every idea of smoothness.

The *ruffled* plumage of the eagle (which Mr. Gilpin has put in Italics, as the circumstance which most strongly marks that character) is both in Mr. West's translation and Mr. Gray's imitation; but as far as I can judge, there is not the least trace of it in the original. I have not the most distant pretensions to any critical knowledge of the Greek language; yet still I think, that by the help of those interpreters who have studied it critically, an unlearned man, if he feels the spirit of a passage, may arrive at a pretty accurate idea of the force of the expressions. From them it appears to me, that far from describing the eagle with *ruffled* plumes, or
with .

they have in common with the rest of the feathered creation. Lastly, among our own

with any circumstance truly picturesque, Pindar has, on the contrary, avoided every idea that might disturb the repose and majestic beauty of his image. After he has described the eagle's flagging wing, he adds *ὕγρον νωτον αἰωρεῖ*, which is so opposite to ruffled, that it seems to signify that perfect smoothness and sleekness given by moisture; that oily suppleness so different from any thing crisp or rumpled, as *ὕγρον ελαιον* expresses the smooth, suppling, undrying quality of oil. The learned Christianus Damm, in his Lexicon, interprets *κνωσων ὕγρον νωτον αἰωρεῖ*, dormiens incurvatum (vel potius læve) tergum attollit, and the action is that of a gentle heaving from respiration during a quiet repose. In another place Damm interprets *ὕγροτις*, mollities; all equally opposite to ruffled. Indeed one might almost suppose that Pindar, having intended to present an image both sublime and beautiful, had avoided every thing that might disturb its still and solemn grandeur, for he has thrown as it were into shade the most marked and picturesque feature of that noble bird; *κελαινωπιν δ' ἐπὶ οἱ νεφελαν ἀγκυλω κρατι, βλεφαρων ἄδυ κλαιστρον, κατεχευας*; a feature which Homer, in a simile full of action and picturesque imagery, has placed in its fullest light:

Οἱ δ' ὥστ' αἰγυπιοὶ γαμφωνυχες, ἀγκυλοχεῖλαι,
Πετρὴ ἐφ' ὑψηλῇ μεγάλα κλαζόντε μαχόνται.

Having been bold enough to criticise both the translation and imitation of Pindar, I shall venture one step

own species, beggars, gypsies, and all such rough tattered figures as are merely picturesque, bear a close analogy, in all the qualities that make them so, to old hovels and mills, to the wild forest horse, and other objects of the same kind.

More dignified characters, such as a Be-

farther, and try to account for the passage having been so rendered. I think Mr. West and Mr. Gray might probably have been impressed with the same idea as Mr. Gilpin, that the imagery in this passage was highly picturesque, but might have felt that smooth feathers would not accord with that character, and therefore perhaps (as Sir Joshua Reynolds observes on Algarotti's ill-founded eulogium of a picture of Titian) they chose to find in Pindar what they thought they ought to have found. With all the respect I have for their abilities (and Mr. Gray's cannot be rated too high) I must think that by one word they have changed the character of that famous passage, and it may be doubted whether they have improved it.

Were their image represented in painting it might be more striking, more catching to the eye than Pindar's, and that is the true character of the picturesque; but his would have more of that repose, that solemn breadth, that freedom from all bustle, which I believe accords more truly with the genuine unmixed characters both of beauty and sublimity*, and with the ideas of the great original.

* Vide Sir Joshua Reynolds's Notes in Mason's *Du Fresnoy*, p. 36:

lifarius,

Belisarius, a Marius in age and exile *, have the same mixture of picturesqueness and decayed grandeur as the venerable remains of the magnificence of past ages.

If we ascend to the highest order of created beings, as painted by the grandest of our poets, they, in their state of glory and happiness, raise chiefly ideas of beauty and sublimity: like earthly objects, they become picturesque when † ruined—when shadows have obscured their original brightness, and that uniform, though angelic expression of pure love and joy, has been destroyed by a variety of warring passions:

Darken'd so, yet shone
Above them all the archangel; but his face
Deep scars of thunder had entrench'd, and care

Sat

* The noble picture of Salvator Rosa, at Lord Townshend's, which in the print is called Belisarius, has been thought to be a Marius among the ruins of Carthage.

† Nor appear'd
Less than archangel *ruin'd*, and the excess
Of glory obscured.

Sat on his faded cheek ; but under brows
 Of dauntless courage and considerate pride
 Waiting revenge ; cruel his eye, but cast
 Signs of remorse and passion.

If from nature we turn to that art from which the expression itself is taken, we shall find all the principles of picturesqueness confirmed. Among painters, Salvator Rosa is one of the most remarkable for his picturesque style, and in no other master are seen such abrupt and rugged forms, such sudden deviations both in his figures and his landscapes ; and the roughness and broken touches of his pencilling admirably accord with the objects they characterize.

Guido, on the other hand, was as eminent for beauty ; in his celestial countenances are the happiest examples of gradual variation—of lines that melt and flow into each other ; no sudden break—nothing that can disturb that pleasing languor which the union of all that constitutes beauty impresses on the soul. The
 style

style of his hair is as smooth as its own character and its effect in accompanying the face will allow ; the flow of his drapery—the sweetness and equality of his pencilling—and the silvery clearness and purity of his tints, are all examples of the justness of Mr. Burke's principles of beauty. But the works even of this great master shew us how unavoidably an attention to mere beauty and flow of outline will lead towards sameness and infidelity. If this has happened to a painter of such high excellence, who so well knew the value of all that belongs to his art, and whose touch, when he painted a St. Peter or a St. Jerome, was as much admired for its spirited and characteristic roughness, as for its equality and smoothness in his angels and madonnas,—what must be the case with men who have been tethered all their lives in a clump or a belt.

There is another instance of contrast between two eminent painters, which I cannot

not

not forbear mentioning, as it confirms the alliance between roughness and picturesqueness, and between smoothness and beauty, and shews, in the latter case, the consequent danger of sameness. Of all the painters who have left behind them a high reputation, none, perhaps, was more uniformly smooth than Albano, or less deviated into abruptness of any kind; none also have greater monotony of character; but, from the extreme beauty and delicacy of his forms, and his tints (particularly in his children) and his exquisite finishing, few pictures are more generally captivating.

His scholar, Mola, (and that circumstance makes it more singular) is as remarkable for many of those opposite qualities that distinguish S. Rosa, though he has not the boldness and animation of that original genius. There is hardly any painter whose pictures more immediately catch the eye of a connoisseur, than those of Mola, or that less attract the notice of

§

a person

a person unused to painting. Salvator has a savage grandeur, often in the highest degree sublime ; and sublimity, in any shape, will command attention ; but Mola's scenes and figures, for the most part, are neither sublime nor beautiful ; they are purely picturesque : his touch is less rough than Salvator's ; his colouring has, in general, more richness and variety ; and his pictures seem to me the most perfect examples of the higher stile of picturesqueness, infinitely removed from vulgar nature, but having neither the softness and delicacy of beauty, nor that grandeur of conception which produces the sublime.

CHAPTER IV.

PICTURESQUENESS, therefore, appears to hold a station between beauty and sublimity; and on that account, perhaps, is more frequently and more happily blended with them both than they are with each other. It is, however, perfectly distinct from either; and first, with respect to beauty, it is evident, from all that has been said, that they are founded on very opposite qualities; the one on smoothness *, the other on roughness;—the one on

* Baldness seems to be an exception, as there smoothness is picturesque, and not beautiful. It is, however, an exception, which, instead of weakening, confirms what I have said, and shews the constant opposition of the two characters, even where their causes appear to be confounded.

Baldness

on gradual, the other on sudden variation ; —the one on ideas of youth and freshness, the other on that of age, and even of decay.

But as most of the qualities of visible beauty (excepting colour) are made known to us through the medium of another sense, the sight itself is hardly more to be attended to than the touch, in regard to all those sensations which are excited by beautiful forms ; and the distinction between the beautiful and the picturesque will, perhaps, be most strongly pointed out by means of the latter sense. I am aware that this is liable to a gross and obvious ridicule ; but for that reason none but

Baldness is the smoothness of age and decay, not of youth, health, and freshness : it is picturesque from producing variety and peculiarity of character ; from destroying the usual symmetry and regularity of the face, and substituting an uncertain instead of a certain boundary.

When a bald head is well plaistered and flowered, and the boundary of the forehead distinctly marked in pomatum and powder, it has as little pretension to picturesqueness as to beauty.

*

gross

gross and common-place minds will dwell upon it.

Mr. Burke has observed, that * “men are carried to the sex, in general, as it is the sex, and by the common law of nature; but they are attached to particulars by personal *beauty* ;” he adds, “I call beauty a social quality; for where women and men, and not only they, but when other animals give us a sense of joy and pleasure in beholding them (and there are many that do so) they inspire us with sentiments of tenderness and affection towards their persons; we like to have them near us, and we enter willingly into a kind of relation with them.”

These sentiments of tenderness and affection nature has taught us to express by caresses, by gentle pressure; these are the endearments we make use of (where sex is totally out of the question) to beautiful children, to beautiful animals, and even to things inanimate; and where the size and

* Sublime and Beautiful, p. 66.

character (as in trees, buildings, &c.) excludes any such relation, still something of the same difference of sensation between them and rugged objects appears to subsist; that sensation however is diminished as the size of any beautiful object is increased; and as it approaches towards grandeur and magnificence, it recedes from loveliness.

As the eye borrows many of its sensations from the touch, so that again seems to borrow others from the sight. Soft, fresh, and beautiful colours, though "not sensible to feeling as to sight," give us an inclination to try their effect on the touch; whereas, if the colour be not beautiful, that inclination, I believe, is always diminished, and, in objects merely picturesque, and void of all beauty, is rarely excited*.

* I have read, indeed, in some fairy tale, of a country where age and wrinkles were loved and caressed, and youth and freshness neglected; but in real life, I fancy, the most picturesque old woman, however her admirer may ogle her on that account, is perfectly safe from his caresses.

These

These are the principal circumstances by which the picturesque is separated from the beautiful. It is equally distinct from the sublime; for though there are some qualities common to them both, yet they differ in many essential points, and proceed from very different causes. In the first place, greatness of dimension * is a powerful cause of the sublime; the picturesque has no connection with dimension of any kind (in which it differs from the beautiful also) and is as often found in the smallest as in the largest objects.—The sublime being founded on principles of awe and terror, never descends to any thing light or playful; the picturesque, whose charac-

* I would by no means lay too much stress on greatness of dimension; but what Mr. Burke has observed with regard to buildings, is true of many natural objects, such as rocks, cascades, &c.; where the scale is too diminutive, no greatness of manner will give them grandeur.

teristics

teristics are intricacy and variety, is equally adapted to the grandest and to the gayest scenery.—Infinity is one of the most efficient causes of the sublime; the boundless ocean, for that reason, inspires awful sensations: to give it picturesqueness you must destroy that cause of its sublimity; for it is on the shape and disposition of its boundaries that the picturesque in great measure must depend.

Uniformity (which is so great an enemy to the picturesque) is not only compatible with the sublime, but often the cause of it. That general equal gloom which is spread over all nature before a storm, with the stillness so nobly described by Shakspeare, is in the highest degree sublime*. The picturesque requires greater variety, and does not shew itself till the dreadful

* And as we often see against a storm
A silence in the heavens, the wrack stand still,
The bold winds speechless, and the orb itself
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder
Does rend the region.

G

thunder

thunder has rent the region, has tossed the clouds into a thousand towering forms, and opened (as it were) the recesses of the sky. A blaze of light unmixed with shade, on the same principles, tends to the sublime only : Milton has placed light, in its most glorious brightness, as an inaccessible barrier round the throne of the Almighty :

For God is light,
And never but in unapproached light
Dwelt from eternity.

And such is the power he has given even to its diminished splendor,

That the brightest seraphim
Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes.

In one place, indeed, he has introduced very picturesque circumstances in his sublime representation of the deity; but it is of the deity in wrath,—it is when from the weakness and narrowness of our conceptions we give the names and the effects of our passions to the all-perfect Creator :

And clouds began
 To darken all the hill, and smoke to roll
 In dusky wreaths reluctant flames, the sign
 Of wrath awak'd.

In general, however, where the glory, power, or majesty of God are represented, he has avoided that variety of form and of colouring which might take off from simple and uniform grandeur, and has encompassed the divine essence with unapproached light, or with the majesty of darkness.

Again, (if we descend to earth) a perpendicular rock of vast bulk and height, though bare and unbroken,—a deep chafin under the same circumstances, are objects that produce awful sensations; but without some variety and intricacy, either in themselves or their accompaniments, they will not be picturesque.—Lastly, a most essential difference between the two characters is, that the sublime by its solemnity takes off from the loveliness of beauty*,
 whereas

* Majesty and love, says the poet who had most studied the art of love, never can dwell together; and

whereas the picturesque renders it more captivating.

According to Mr. Burke *, the passion caused by the great and sublime in *nature*, when those causes operate most powerfully, is astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul in which all its motions are suspended with some degree of horror: the sublime also, being founded on ideas of pain and terror, like them operates by stretching the fibres beyond their natural tone. The passion excited by beauty is love and complacency; it acts by relaxing the fibres somewhat below their natural tone †, and this is accompanied

therefore Juno, whose beauty was united with majesty, had no captivating charms till she had put on the cestus; that is, till she had changed dignity for coquetry.

* Sublime and Beautiful, Part II. Sect. I.

† I have heard this part of Mr. Burke's book criticised, on a supposition that pleasure is more generally produced from the fibres being stimulated than from their being relaxed. To me it appears that Mr. Burke is right with respect to that pleasure which is the effect of beauty,

accompanied by an inward sense of melting and languor.

Whether this account of the effects of sublimity and beauty be strictly philosophical, has, I believe, been questioned, but whether the fibres, in such cases, are really

beauty, or whatever has an analogy to beauty, according to the principles he has laid down. No man (if we may judge from his confessions) ever felt more strongly than Rousseau both the stimulus of sensual pleasure and all the violent and rapturous emotions of passion; yet what he describes as the most exquisite enjoyment of love and beauty is clearly when the fibres are relaxed somewhat below their natural tone: *O jeunesse, si je regrette tes plaisirs, ce n'est pas pour l'heure de la jouissance, c'est pour celle qui la suit.*

If we examine our feelings on a warm genial day, in a spot full of the softest beauties of nature, the fragrance of spring breathing around us, pleasure then seems to be our natural state; to be received, not sought after; it is the happiness of existing to sensations of delight only; we are unwilling to move, almost to think, and desire only to feel, to enjoy.

How different is that active pursuit of pleasure when the fibres are braced by a keen air in a wild romantic situation; when the activity of the body almost keeps pace with that of the mind, and eagerly scales every rocky promontory, explores every new recess. Such is the difference between the beautiful and the picturesque.

stretched or relaxed, it presents a lively image of the sensations often produced by love and astonishment. To pursue the same train of ideas, I may add, that the effect of the picturesque is curiosity; an effect which, though less splendid and powerful, has a more general influence; it neither relaxes nor violently stretches the fibres, but by its active agency keeps them to their full tone, and thus, when mixed with either of the other characters, corrects the languor of beauty, or the horror of sublimity. But as the nature of every corrective must be to take off from the peculiar effect of what it is to correct, so does the picturesque when united to either of the others. It is the coquetry of nature; it makes beauty more amusing, more varied, more playful, but also,

“ Less winning soft, less amiably mild.”

Again, by its variety, its intricacy, its partial concealments, it excites that active curiosity which gives play to the mind,
loosening

loosening those iron bonds with which astonishment chains up its faculties*.

Where characters, however distinct in their nature, are perpetually mixed together in such various degrees and manners, it is not always easy to draw the exact line of separation: I think, however, we may conclude, that where an object, or a set of objects, is without smoothness or grandeur, but from its intricacy, its sudden and irregular deviations, its variety of forms, tints, and lights and shadows, is interesting to a cultivated eye, it is simply picturesque; such, for instance, are the rough banks that often inclose a bye-road or a hollow lane: Imagine the size of these banks and the space between them to be increased till the lane becomes a deep dell, —the coves large caverns,—the peeping stones hanging rocks, so that the whole

* This seems to be perfectly applicable to tragedy, and is at once its apology and condemnation. Whatever relieves the mind from a strong impression, of course weakens that impression.

may impress an idea of awe and grandeur;—the sublime will then be mixed with the picturesque, though the scale only, not the style of the scenery, would be changed. On the other hand, if parts of the banks were smooth and gently sloping,—or the middle space a soft close-bitten turf,—or if a gentle stream passed between them, whose clear unbroken surface reflected all their varieties,—the beautiful and the picturesque, by means of that * softness and smoothness, would then be united.

* Softness as well as smoothness is become by habit a visible quality, and from the same kind of sympathy is a principle of beauty in many visible objects. But as the hardest bodies are those which receive the highest polish, and consequently the highest degree of smoothness, there are a number of objects in which smoothness and softness are for that reason incompatible. The one however is not unfrequently mistaken for the other, and I have more than once heard pictures which were so smoothly finished that they looked like ivory commended for their softness.

The skin of a delicate woman is an example of softness and smoothness united; but if by art a higher polish is given to the skin, the softness and (in that case I may add)

add) the beauty is destroyed. Fur, moss, hair, wool, &c. are comparatively rough, but are soft and yield to pressure, and therefore take off from the appearance of hardness, and also of edginess; a stone or rock polished by water is smoother but less soft than when covered with moss, and upon this principle the wooded banks of a river have often a softer general effect than the bare shaven border of a canal. There is the same difference between the grass of a pleasure-ground mowed to the quick and that of a fresh meadow, and it frequently happens that by continual mowing the verdure as well as the softness is destroyed, so much does excessive attachment to one principle destroy its own ends.

All this shews that the two characters though distinct are seldom wholly unmixed, for as there are picturesque circumstances in many beautiful entire buildings, so there are also circumstances of beauty in many picturesque ruins.

CHAPTER V.

OF the three characters, two only are in any degree subject to the improver; to *create* the sublime is above our contracted powers, though we may sometimes heighten, and at all times lower its effects by art. It is, therefore, on a proper attention to the beautiful and the picturesque, that the art of improving real landscapes must depend.

As beauty is the most pleasing of all ideas to the human mind, it is very natural that it should be most sought after, and that the name should have been applied to every species of excellence. Mr. Burke has done a great deal towards settling the vague and contradictory ideas which were entertained on that subject, by investigating

ing its principal causes and effects ; but as the best things are often perverted to the worst purposes, so his admirable treatise has, perhaps, been one cause of the insipidity that has prevailed under the name of improvement. Few places have any claim to sublimity, and where nature has not given them that character, art is ineffectual ; beauty, therefore, is the great object, and improvers have learned from the highest authority, that two of its principal causes are smoothness and gradual variation ; these qualities are in themselves very seducing, but they are still more so (when applied to the surface of ground) from its being in every man's power to produce them ; it requires neither taste nor invention, but merely the mechanical hand and eye of many a common labourer, and he who can make a nice asparagus bed has one of the most essential qualifications of an improver, and may soon learn the whole mystery of slopes and hanging levels.

If

If the principles of the beautiful, according to Mr. Burke, and those of the picturesque, according to my ideas, are just, it seldom happens that they are perfectly unmixed ; and, I believe, it is for want of observing how nature has blended them, and from attempting to make objects beautiful by dint of smoothness and flowing lines, that so much insipidity has arisen.

The most enchanting object the eye of man can behold, that which immediately presents itself to his imagination when beauty is mentioned—that, in comparison of which all other beauty appears tasteless and uninteresting, is the face of a beautiful woman ; but even there, where nature has fixed the throne of beauty, the very seat of its empire, she has guarded it, in her most perfect models, from its two dangerous foes—insipidity and monotony. The Greeks (who cannot be accused of having neglected the study of beauty, or, like Dutch painters, of having servilely copied whatever was before them)

judged

judged that the strait line of the nose and forehead was necessary to give a zest to all the other flowing lines of the face; then the eyebrows and the eyelashes, by their projecting shade over the transparent surface of the eye, and above all the hair, by its comparative roughness and its partial concealments, accompany and relieve the softness, clearness, and smoothness of all the rest; where the hair has no natural roughness, it is often artificially curled and crisped *, and it cannot be supposed that
both

• The instrument for that purpose is certainly of very ancient date, as Virgil (who probably studied the costume of the heroic age) supposes it to have been in use at the time of the Trojan war, and makes Turnus speak contemptuously of Æneas for having his locks perfumed, and, as Madame de Sevigné expresses it, *frisés naturellement avec des fers*;

Vibratos calido ferro myrrhâque madentes.

The *natural* roughness or crispness of hair is often mentioned as a beauty—*l'aurée crespè crini—capelli crespè & lunghe & d'oro.*

In many points the hair has a striking relation to trees; they resemble each other in their intricacy, their ductility, the quickness of their growth, their seeming to
acquire

both sexes have been so often mistaken in what would best become them.

Flowers are the most delicate and beautiful of all inanimate objects, but their queen, the rose, grows on a rough bush, whose leaves are ferrated, and which is full of thorns. The moss rose has the addition of a rough hairy fringe, that almost makes a part of the flower itself. The arbutus, with its fruit, its pendant flowers, and rich glossy foliage, is, perhaps, the most beautiful of all the hardier evergreen shrubs; but the bark of it is rugged, and the leaves (which, like those of the

acquire fresh vigour from being cut, and in their being detached from the solid bodies whence they spring; they are the varied boundaries, the loose and airy fringes, without which mere earth or mere flesh, however beautifully formed, are bald and imperfect, and want their most becoming ornament.

In catholic countries, where those unfortunate victims of avarice and superstition are supposed to renounce all idea of pleasing our sex, the first ceremony is that of cutting off their hair, as a sacrifice of the most seducing ornament of beauty; and the formal edge of the fillet, that prevents a single hair from escaping, is well contrived to deaden the effect of features.

rose,

rose, are sawed at the edges) have those edges pointed upwards, and clustering in spikes; and it may possibly be from that circumstance, and from the boughs having the same upright tendency, that Virgil calls it *arbutus horrida*, or, as it stands in some manuscripts *, *horrens*. Among the

* This epithet is frequently applied to sharp pointed and jagged objects, in the same upright position—*horrentibus hastis*—*cautibus horrens Caucasus*—*horridior rusco*, &c. The Delphin edition supposes it to be called *horrida*, quia *raris est foliis*; but the *arbutus* is far from being thin of leaves, when in a flourishing state. *Ruræus* may probably have taken this idea from a verse in the 7th Eclogue—*rarâ tegit arbutus umbrâ*, which he interprets, *raris inumbrat foliis*; but in another place Virgil calls it, *frondentia arbuta*; and if *rarâ*, in the first passage, does mean thin (as Martyn has also rendered it) it accords but ill with *tegit*, and with the shepherd's request—*solstitium pecori defendite*: I therefore imagine *rarâ* may mean, in that place, (as it does in many languages) excellent—*rarum*, quod non ubique reperitur, unde pro præstanti sumitur. Stef. Thes. Martyn thinks it is called *horrida* from the roughness of the bark; but an epithet, which applies to the tree in general, is more likely to be given from the general outward form than from a particular part less apparent, and often entirely hid. Many plants point their leaves *downwards*, as the lilac, chestnut, Portugal laurel, &c. Whoever will com-
pare

the foreign oaks, maples, &c. those are particularly esteemed, whose leaves (according to a common, though perhaps contradictory phrase) are beautifully jagged.

The oriental plane has always been reckoned a tree of the greatest beauty: Xerxes' passion for one of them is well known, as also the high estimation they were held in by the Greeks and Romans: the surface of its leaves is smooth and glossy, and of a bright pleasant green; but they are so deeply indented, and so full of sharp angles, that the tree itself is often distinguished by the name of the true *jagged* oriental plane.

The vine leaf has, in * all respects, a

pare the arbutus and the Portugal laurel, both whose leaves are serrated, will find how strongly the epithet, *horrens*, applies to the former. Of the verb *horreo*, Stephens says, *proprie cum pili setæque in animante eriguntur; vulgarly, stand an end; capilli horrent.*

* The leaf of the Burgundy vine is rough, and its inferiority, in point of beauty, to the smooth-leaved vines, is, I think, very apparent, and clearly owing to that circumstance.

strong

strong resemblance to the leaf of the plane, and that extreme richness of effect, which every body must be struck with in them both, is greatly owing to those sharp angles, those sudden variations so contrary to the idea of beauty when considered by itself.—On the other hand, a cluster of fine grapes, in point of form, tint, and light and shadow, is a specimen of unmixed beauty, and the vine, with its fruit, one of the most striking instances of the union of the two characters, in which, however, that of beauty infinitely prevails; and who will venture to assert that the charm of the whole would be greater by separating them? by taking off all the angles and sharp points, and making the outline of the leaves as round and flowing as that of the fruit?—The effect of these jagged points and angles is more strongly marked in sculpture, especially of vases of metal, where the vine leaf, if imprudently handled, would at least prove that sharpness is very contrary to the beautiful in feeling;

H

and

and the analogy between the two senses is surely very just. It may also be remarked, that in all such works sharpness of execution is a term of high praise.

I must here observe (and I must beg to call the reader's attention to what seems to me to throw a strong light on the whole of the subject) that almost all ornaments are rough, and most of them sharp, which is a mode of roughness, and, considered analogically, the most contrary to beauty of any mode. But as the ornaments are rough, so the ground is generally smooth, which shews, that though smoothness is the ground, the essential quality of beauty, without which it can scarcely exist, yet that roughness, in its different modes and degrees, is the ornament, the fringe of beauty—that which gives it life and spirit, and preserves it from baldness and insipidity *.

The

* The most beautiful of all sounds, that of the human voice, appears to the greatest advantage when there is some degree of sharpness in the instrument that ac-

The column is smooth, the capital is rough; the facing of a building smooth, the frize and cornice rough and suddenly projecting: so it is in vases, in embroidery, in every thing that admits of ornament †, and as ornament is the most prominent

companies it, as in the harp, the violin, or the harpsichord: the flute; or even the organ, have too much of the same quality of sound; they give no relief to the voice; it is like accompanying smooth water with smooth banks. Often in the sweetest and most flowing melodies, discords (which are analogous to angles and sharpness) are introduced to relieve the ear from that languor and weariness which long continued smoothness always brings on; yet will any one say, that, considered separately, the sound of a harpsichord is as beautiful as that of a flute, or of a human voice; or that they ought to be classed together? or that discords are as beautiful as concords; or that both are beautiful, because when they are mixed with judgment the whole is more delightful? Does not this shew that what is very justly called beautiful, from the essential qualities of beauty being predominant, is frequently, nay, generally composite, and that we act against the constant practice of nature and of judicious art, when we endeavour to make objects more beautiful by depriving them of what gives beauty some of its most powerful attractions.

† A goblet, rich with gems and rough with gold.—
Pallam signis auroque rigentem.

prominent and striking part of a beautiful whole, it is frequently taken for the most essential part, and obtains the first place in descriptions. But were an architect to ornament the shafts as well as the capitals of his columns, and all the smooth stone work of his house or temple, there are few people who would not be sensible of the difference between a beautiful building and one richly ornamented. This, in my mind, is the spirit of that famous reproof of Apelles (among all the painters of antiquity the most renowned for beauty) to one of his scholars who was loading a Helen with ornaments; "Young man," said he, "not being able to paint her beautiful, you have made her rich."

Consider what is the natural, the only process in ornamenting any smooth surface, independently of colour; it must be by making it less smooth, that is, comparatively rough: there must be different degrees and modes of roughness, of sharpness, and this is the character of those ornaments that have been admired for ages.

CHAPTER VI.

AS, notwithstanding the various and striking lights in which Mr. Burke has placed all that relates to beauty, and the very close and convincing analogies he has drawn from the other senses to shew how much *smoothness* is essential to it, that position has been doubted *; I hope

* A person of the most unquestioned abilities and general accuracy of judgment, but who had not paid much attention to this subject, asserted that a variety of objects were beautiful without the least smoothness, and that the picturesque was always included either in the sublime or the beautiful. I asked him what he would call an old rugged mossy oak, with branches twisted into sudden and irregular deviations, but which had no character of grandeur? he said, he should call it a pretty

hope it will not be thought presumptuous in me to offer some farther illustrations on a subject he has treated so copiously and in so masterly a manner. I am, indeed, highly interested in the question, for if his principles are false, mine are equally so.

I imagine the doubt to have arisen from its being supposed that all that strongly attracts and captivates the eye is included in the sublime and the beautiful; but I cannot help flattering myself, that the having considered and compared the three characters together has thrown a reciprocal light on each; and that the picturesque fills up a vacancy between the sublime and the beautiful, and accounts for the pleasure we receive from many objects on principles distinct from either, which objects should therefore be placed on a separate class.

tree. He would probably have been surprised if I had called one of Rembrant's old hags a pretty woman; and yet they are as much alike as a tree and a woman can well be.

One

One principal effect of smoothness, and to which perhaps it owes its so general power of pleasing, is, that it gives an appearance of quiet and repose to all objects; * roughness, on the contrary, a spirit and animation. These seem to me likewise the

* By roughness I mean what is in any way contrary to smoothness; whatever is rough, rugged, or angular, whether the object be polished or unpolished. According to this definition, polished surfaces if cut into angles, as polished steel, glass, or diamond, can no longer be considered as smooth objects, though parts of them will be smooth.

A diamond when smooth has, like other polished surfaces, a considerable degree of stimulus, but when its surface is cut into sharp points and angles, it becomes infinitely more stimulating: it is by means of these angles, of these sharp points, that a diamond acquires its distinguished title of a brilliant; without them a piece of cut-glass (as it is termed) would deserve it better.

Again (to consider broken lights in another point of view) we can bear the full uninterrupted splendor of the setting sun, nay, can gaze on the orb itself with little uneasiness, but when its rays are broken by passing through a thin screen of leaves and branches (as in a lane) no eye is proof against the irritation,

most prevailing effects of the beautiful and the picturesque; these the means by which they generally operate, and if these premises are true, it will be just to conclude, that where there is a want of smoothness there is a want of repose, and consequently of beauty; and on the other hand, that where there is no roughness there is a want of spirit and stimulus, and consequently of picturesqueness.

The sense of seeing (as I before observed) is so much indebted to that of feeling for a number of its perceptions, that there is no considering the one abstractedly from the other; he therefore would reason very ill on the effects of vision, who should leave out our ideas of rough and smooth, of hard and soft, of thickness, distance, &c. because they were originally acquired by the touch. I should on that account suppose, that besides the real irritation which they produce by means of broken lights, all broken rugged surfaces have also, by sympathy,

sympathy, something of the same effect on the sight as on the touch; and if it be true (as it probably will be acknowledged) that smooth surfaces, where there is no immediate irritation from light, give a repose to the eye, rugged and broken ones must produce a contrary impression.

But though it seems highly probable that broken and angular surfaces, both from sympathy and from real irritation of the organ, stimulate more than such as are smooth, yet the stimulus from whence the most constant and marked effects proceed, that which in a peculiar manner belongs to the picturesque, and distinguishes it from the beautiful,—arises principally from its two great characteristics, intricacy and variety, as produced by roughness and sudden deviation, and as opposed to the comparative monotony of smoothness and flowing lines.

If we take any smooth object, whose
lines

lines are flowing, such as a down of the finest turf with gently swelling knolls and hillocks of every soft and undulating form, though the eye may repose on this with pleasure, yet the whole is seen at once, and no farther curiosity is excited ; but let those swelling knolls (without altering the scale) be changed into bold broken promontories, with rude overhanging rocks ; instead of the smooth turf, let there be furze, heath, or fern, with open patches between, and fragments of rocks and large stones lying in irregular masses, it is clear, on the supposition of these two spots being of the same extent and on the same scale, that the whole of the one may be comprehended immediately, and that if you traverse it in every direction little new can occur ; while in the other every step changes the whole of the composition. Then each of these broken promontories and fragments have as many suddenly varying forms and aspects as they have breaks,

even

even without light and shade; but when the sun does shine upon them, each break is the occasion of some brilliant light opposed to some sudden shadow: All these deep coves, hollows, and fissures invite the eye to penetrate into their recesses, yet keep its curiosity alive and unsatisfied; whereas in the other, the light and shadow has the same uniform unbroken character as the ground itself.

I have in both these scenes avoided any mention of trees; for in all trees of every growth there is a comparative roughness and intricacy, which, unless counteracted by great skill in the improver, will always prevent absolute monotony: Yet the difference between those which appear planted or cleared for the purpose of beauty, and where the ground is perfectly smooth about them, and those which are wild and uncleared, and the ground of the same character, is very apparent. Take, for instance, any open grove where the trees,
 though

though neither in rows nor at equal distances, are detached from each other, and cleared from all underwood; the turf on which they stand smooth and level, and their stems distinctly seen; such a grove of full-grown flourishing trees, that have had room to extend their heads and branches, is deservedly called beautiful; and if a gravel road winds easily through it, the whole will be in character.

But whoever has been among forests, and has seen the effect of wild tangled thickets opening into glades half seen across the stems of old stag-headed oaks and twisted beeches, and of the irregular tracks of wheels, of men, and of animals, seeking or forcing their way in every direction, must have felt how differently the stimulus of curiosity is excited in two such scenes; and the effect of the lights and shadows is exactly in proportion to the intricacy of the objects.

From all this it appears, that as a certain

tain degree of stimulus or irritation is necessary to the picturesque, so, on the other hand, a soft and pleasing repose is equally the effect and the characteristic of the beautiful.

The peculiar beauty of the most beautiful of all landscape painters is characterised by *il riposo di Claudio*, and when the mind of man is in the delightful state of repose, of which Claude's pictures are the image,—when he feels that mild and equal sunshine of the soul which warms and cheers, but neither inflames nor irritates,—his heart seems to dilate with happiness, he is disposed to every act of kindness and benevolence, to love and cherish all around him. These are the sensations that beauty, considered generally, and without any distinction of nature or sex, does and ought to inspire. A mind in such a state is like a pure and tranquil lake, the slightest impulse on whose surface excites a correspondent motion in its waters, which gently expand themselves on every
side;

side ; but if the heaviest mass be thrown into a rapid stream the effect is short-lived ; if into a river tumbling over stones, or dashing among rocks, it is momentary ; this is an emblem of irritation as the other of repose.

Irritation* is indeed the source of our most active and lively pleasures, but its nature, like the pleasures which spring from it, is eager, hurrying, impetuous ; and when the mind is agitated, from whatever cause, those mild and soft emotions which flow from beauty, and of which

* I am aware that irritation is generally used in a bad sense, rather as a source of pain than of pleasure ; but that is the case with many words and expressions which relate to our more eager and tumultuous emotions, and seems to point out their distinct nature and origin. We talk of the stings of pleasure, of being goaded on by desire. The god of love (and who will deny love to be a source of pleasure?) is armed with flames, with envenomed shafts, with every instrument of irritation :

Of all that breathes, the various progeny,
Stung with delight, is goaded on by thee.

beauty

beauty is the genuine source, are scarcely perceived. Let those who have been used to observe the works of nature reflect on their sensations when viewing the smooth and tranquil scene of a beautiful lake,—or the wild, abrupt, and noisy one of a picturesque river: I think they will own them to have been as different as the scenes themselves, and that nothing but the poverty of language makes us call two sensations so distinct from each other by the common name of pleasure.

Having considered the effects of repose and irritation as caused by the fixed properties of material objects, I will now examine how they are produced by what is immaterial and uncertain; and how far the various accidents of light and shadow (two opposite though almost inseparable ideas, and which therefore in the language of painters are often combined into one) correspond with the inherent qualities of objects, and with their operation on the mind.

Nothing

Nothing is more obvious than that all strong and brilliant lights, all sudden contrasts of them with deep shadows, stimulate the organ of sight. It is equally obvious that all soft quiet lights, and such as insensibly melt into shadow, and emerge from it again in the same gradual manner, give a pleasing * repose to the eye. These positions will be most aptly illustrated, and their applications to the beautiful and the picturesque most clearly pointed out by attending to the practice of two painters whose works are in the highest esteem, and the style and character of them established by general consent.

* It is this charm of repose and of softness that poets lay so much stress on when they describe the beauties of moon-light, which many of them seem to do with peculiar fondness:

“ Now reigns

“ Full-orb'd the moon, and with more *pleasing* light
“ *Shadowy* sets off the face of things.”

And that feeling passage in Shakespear :

“ How sweet the moon-light *sleeps* upon yon bank.”

The

The genius of Rubens was strongly turned to the picturesque disposition of his figures, so as often to sacrifice every other consideration to the intricacy, contrast, and striking variations of his groupes. Such a disposition of objects seems to call for something similar in the management of the light and shade, and accordingly we owe the most striking examples of both to his fertile invention. In point of brilliancy, of such extreme splendour of light as is on the verge of glare*, no pictures can stand in competition with those of Rubens: sometimes those lights are almost unmixed with shade; at other times they burst from dark shadows, they glance on the different parts of the picture, and produce that flicker (as it sometimes is called) so captivating to the eye; but so

* I speak of those pictures (and they are very numerous) in which he aimed at great brilliancy. As no one possessed more entirely all the principles of his art, on some occasions the solemn breadth of his light and shade is as striking as its force and splendour on others.

dangerous when attempted by inferior artists, and less masters of the principles of harmony than that great painter. All these dazzling effects are heightened by the spirited management of his pencil, by those sharp animated touches* that give life and energy to every object.

Correggio's

* Many painters, when they represent any striking effects of light, leave the touches of the pencil more rough and strongly marked than the quality of the objects themselves seems to justify. Rembrant, who succeeded beyond all others in these forcible effects, carried also this method of creating them farther than any other master. Those who have seen his famous picture in the stadthouse at Amsterdam may remember a figure highly illuminated, whose dress is a silver tissue, with fringes, tassels, and other ornaments nearly of the same brilliant colour. It is the most surprising instance I ever saw of the effect of that rough manner of pencilling, in producing what most nearly approaches to the glitter, and to the irritation which is caused by real light when acting powerfully on any object; and this too, with a due attention to general harmony, and with such a commanding truth of representation as no high finishing can give.

It seems to me, that this may be accounted for on the principle I have before mentioned, of roughness in material objects being a cause of irritation: light in
itself

Correggio's principal attention (in point of form) was directed to flow of outline and gradual variation; of this he never entirely lost sight even in his most capricious fore-shortenings; and his style of light and shadow is so congenial, that the one seems the natural consequence of the other. He is always cited as the most perfect model of those soft and insensible transitions, of that union of effect, which, above every thing else, impresses the general idea of loveliness. The manner of his pencilling is exactly of a piece with the rest; all seems melted together, yet with so nice a judgment as to avoid, by some of those free yet

itself has nothing that bears any relation to rough or smooth; but when strong, irritates in a high degree: As painting cannot attain to the full splendour even of reflected light, and as that splendour acts by stimulating, it is natural that painters should have helped out the insufficiency of the art by some other stimulus, and by increasing the irritating quality of the object illuminated, have strove to make a nearer approach to that of light itself.

delicate touches, the hardness as well as the insipidity of what is called high finishing. Correggio's pictures are indeed as far removed from monotony as from glare; he seems to have felt beyond all others the exact degree of brilliancy that accords with the softness of beauty, and to have been, with regard to figures, what Claude was in landscape.

The pictures of Claude are brilliant in a high degree; but that brilliancy is so diffused over the whole of them, so happily balanced, it is so mellowed and subdued by that almost visible atmosphere which pervades every part, and unites all together, that nothing in particular catches the eye; the whole is splendor, the whole is repose; every thing lit up, every thing in sweetest harmony. Rubens in his landscapes differs as strongly from Claude as he does from Correggio in his figures; they are full of the peculiarities and picturesque accidents in nature; of striking contrasts of form, colour, and light and shadow;

shadow ; sun-beams bursting through a small opening in a dark wood—a rainbow against a stormy sky—effects of thunder and lightning — torrents rolling down trees torn up by the roots, and the dead bodies of men and animals ; with many other sublime and picturesque circumstances. These sudden gleams, these cataracts of light, these bold oppositions of clouds and darkness, which he has so nobly introduced, would destroy all the beauty and elegance of Claude : On the other hand, the mild and equal sunshine * of that charming painter would as ill accord

* Nothing is so captivating, or seems so much to accord with our ideas of beauty, as the smiles of a beautiful countenance ; yet they have sometimes a striking mixture of the other character. Of this kind are those smiles which break out suddenly from a serious, sometimes from almost a severe countenance, and which, when that gleam is over, leave no trace of it behind—

Like to the lightning in a collied night,
Which e'er a man has time to say, behold !
The jaws of darkness do devour it up.

accord with the twisted and singular forms, and the bold and animated variety of the landscapes of Rubens.

These few instances from the art of painting (and many more might easily be produced) shew how much softness, smoothness, gradual variation of form, insensible transitions from light to shadow, and general repose, are the characteristic marks of artists most renowned for beauty; and these causes operate so powerfully when united, that notwithstanding the

This sudden effect is often hinted at by the Italian poets, as appears by their allusion to the most sudden and dazzling of lights;—*gli scintilla un riso—lampeggia un riso—il balenar d'un riso.*

There is another smile which seems in the same degree to accord with the ideas of beauty only: It is that smile which proceeds from a mind full of sweetness and sensibility, and which, when it is over, still leaves on the countenance its mild and amiable impression; as after the sun is set, the mild glow of his rays is still diffused over every object. This smile, with the glow that accompanies it, is beautifully painted by Milton, as most becoming an inhabitant of heaven:

To whom the angel, with a smile that glow'd
Celestial rosy red, love's proper hue,
Thus answer'd.

pure

pure outline, and the happy mixture of the antique character in Raphael, the angelic air of Guido, and the peculiar and separate beauties of other painters, I believe that most people, if they were asked what pictures (taking every circumstance together) appeared to them most beautiful, and had left the softest and most pleasing impression, they would give it for Correggio.—In beauty of landscape Claude has no competitor.

CHAPTER VII.

THESE effects of harmony and repose naturally lead me to that great principle of the art of * painting (for it is the great connecting and harmonizing principle of nature) breadth of light and shadow.

What is called breadth seems to bear nearly the same relation to light and shadow as smoothness does to material objects; for as all uneven surfaces cause more irritation than those which are smooth, and those most of all that are broken into little inequalities, so those lights and shadows that are scattered and broken are

* Or rather, in a more just and comprehensive view, of that art which chiefly, by means of light and shadow, bodies forth the forms of things from a plain surface, and which, being independent of colours, includes every species of drawing and engraving.

infinitely

infinitely more irritating than those which are broad and continued. Every person of the least observation must have remarked how *broad* the lights and shadows are on a fine evening in nature, or (what is almost the same thing) in a picture of Claude. He must equally have remarked the extreme difference between such lights and shadows, and those meagre and frittered ones that sometimes disgrace the works of painters in other respects of great excellence, and which prevail in nature when the sun-beams, refracted and dispersed in every direction by a number of white flickering clouds, create a perpetually shifting glare, and keep the eye in a state of constant irritation. All such accidental effects arising from clouds, though they strongly shew the general principle, and are highly proper to be studied by all lovers of painting or of nature, yet not being subject to our controul, are of less use to improvers; a great deal however *is* subject to our controul,

and

and I believe we may lay it down as a very general maxim, that in proportion as the objects are scattered, unconnected, and in patches, the lights and shadows will be so too, and vice versa.

If, for instance, we suppose a continued sweep of hills, either entirely wooded or entirely bare, and under the influence of a low cloudless sun; whatever parts are exposed to that sun will have one broad light upon them, whatever are hid from it one broad shade. If we again suppose this wood to have been thinned in such a manner as to have left masses, groupes, and single trees so disposed as to present a pleasing and connected whole, though with detached parts; or, if we suppose the bare hills to have been planted in the same style, the variety of light and shadow will be greatly increased, and the general breadth still be preserved; nor would that breadth be injured if an old ruin, a cottage, or any building of a quiet tint was discovered among the trees. But if the

wood were so thinned as to have a poor, scattered, unconnected appearance; or the hills planted in clumps, patches, and detached trees, the lights and shadows would have the same broken disjointed effect as the objects themselves. If to this were added any harsh contrast, such as clumps of firs and white buildings, the irritation would be greatly increased. In all these cases, the eye, instead of reposing on one broad connected whole, is stopt and harassed by little disunited discordant parts: I of course suppose the sun to act on these different objects with equal splendour; for there are some days when the whole sky is so full of jarring lights, that the shadiest groves and avenues hardly preserve their solemnity; and there are others when the atmosphere (like the last glazing of a picture) softens into mellowness whatever is crude throughout the landscape.

This is peculiarly the effect of * twilight;
for

* Milton, whose eyes seem to have been most sensibly affected by every accident and gradation of light,
(and

for at that delightful time even artificial water, however naked, edgy, and tame its banks, will often receive a momentary charm, when all that is scattered and cutting, all that disgusts a painter's eye, is blended together in one broad and soothing harmony of light and shadow. I have more than once at such a moment happened to arrive at a place entirely new to me, and have been struck in the highest

(and *that* possibly in a great degree from the weakness, and consequently the irritability of those organs) speaks always of twilight with peculiar pleasure. He has even reversed what Socrates did by philosophy; he has called up twilight from earth and placed it in heaven:

From that high mount of God whence light and shade
Spring forth, the face of brightest heaven had chang'd
To grateful twilight.

What is also singular, he has in this passage made shade an essence equally with light, not merely a privation of it; a compliment never, I believe, paid to shadow before, but which might be expected from his aversion to glare so frequently and strongly expressed:

Hide me from day's *garish* eye.

When the sun begins to sing
His *flaring* beams.

degree

degree with the appearance of wood, water, and buildings, that seemed to accompany and set off each other in the happiest manner, and have felt impatient to examine all these beauties by day-light :

“ At length the morn and cold indifference came.”

The charm which held them together, and made them act so powerfully as a whole, was gone.

It may perhaps be said, that the imagination, from a few imperfect hints, may form beauties which have no existence, and that indifference may naturally arise from those phantoms not being realized. I am far from denying the power of partial concealment and obscurity on the imagination ; but in these cases the same set of objects, when seen by twilight, is often beautiful as a picture, and would appear highly so if exactly represented on the canvass ; but in full day-light the sun, as it were, decomposes what had been so happily mixed together, and separates a striking

ing whole into detached unimpressive parts.

Nothing, I believe, would be of more service in forming a taste for general effect and general composition, than to observe the same scenes after sun-set, and in the full distinctness of day. In fact, twilight does what an improver ought to do; it connects what was before scattered; it fills up staring, meagre vacancies; it destroys edginess, and by giving shadow as well as light to water, at once increases both its brilliancy and softness. It must however be observed, that twilight, while it takes off the edginess of those objects which are *below* the horizon, more sensibly marks the outline of those which are *opposed* to the sky, and consequently discovers the defects as well as the beauties of their forms. From this circumstance, improvers may learn a very useful lesson, that the outline against the sky should be particularly attended to, so that nothing lumpy, meagre, or discordant should be there; at all times, in such a situation, the form is made out,
but

but most of all when twilight has melted the other parts together. At that time many varied and elegant shapes of trees and groupes distinctly appear, which were scarcely noticed in the more general diffusion of light; then too the stubborn clump (which before was but too plainly seen) makes a still fouler blot on the horizon; while there is a glimmering of light he maintains his post, nor yields till even his blackness is at last confounded in the general blackness of night.

These are the powers and effects of that breadth I have been describing; it is a source of visual pleasure distinct from all others; for objects which in themselves are neither beautiful, sublime, nor picturesque, are incidentally made to delight the eye from their being productive of breadth. This seems to account for the pleasure we receive from many massive heavy objects, which, when deprived of the effect of that harmonizing principle, and considered singly, are even positively
ugly.

ugly. Such, indeed, is the effect of breadth, that pictures or drawings eminently possessed of it, though they should have no other merit, will always attract the attention of a cultivated eye before others where the detail is admirable, but where this master-principle is wanting. The mind, however, requires to be stimulated as well as soothed, and there is in this, as in so many other instances, a strong analogy between painting and music: the first effect of mere breadth of light and shadow is to the eye what that of mere harmony of sounds is to the ear; both produce a pleasing repose, a calm sober delight, which, if not relieved by something less uniform, soon sinks into distaste and weariness; for repose and sleep are often synonymous terms, and always nearly allied. But as the principle of harmony must be preserved in the wildest and most eccentric pieces of music, in those where sudden and quickly varying emotions of the soul are expressed, so that of breadth must

must be in scenes of bustle and seeming confusion, and where the wildest scenery or most violent agitations of nature are represented; and one may here parody that frequently quoted passage of Shakespeare, "in the very torrent, tempest, and whirlwind of the elements, the artist, in painting them, must acquire a breadth that will give them smoothness."

There is, however, no small difficulty in uniting breadth with the detail, the splendid variety, and marked character of nature. Claude is admirable in this as in almost every other respect; with the greatest accuracy of detail, and truth of character, his pictures have the breadth of the simplest washed drawing, or aquatinta print, where little else is expressed or intended. In a strong light they are full of interesting and entertaining particulars; and as twilight comes on (an effect I have observed with great delight) they have the same gradual fading of the glimmering landscape as in real nature.

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This art of preserving breadth with detail and brilliancy has been studied with great success by Teniers, Jan Steen, and many of the Dutch masters. Ostade's pictures and etchings are among the happiest examples of it; but above all others, the works of that scarce and wonderful master, Gerard Dow. His eye seems to have had a microscopic power in regard to the minute texture of objects (for in his paintings they bear the severe trial of the strongest magnifier) and at the same time the opposite faculty of excluding all particulars with respect to breadth and general effect. His master, Rembrant, though he did not attend to minute detail, yet by that commanding manner of marking, with equal force and justness, the leading character of each object, produced an idea of detail much beyond what is really expressed. Many of the great Italian masters have done this also, and with a taste, and a grandeur and nobleness of style unknown to the inferior schools, though
 none

nene have exceeded or even equalled Rembrant in truth, force, and effect. But when artists, neglecting the variety of detail, and those characteristic features that well supply its place, content themselves with *mere* breadth, and propose that as the final object of attainment, their productions, and the interest excited by them, will be, in comparison of the styles I have mentioned, what a metaphysical treatise is to Shakespeare or Fielding; they will be rather illustrations of a principle than representations of what is real; a sort of abstract idea of nature, not very unlike Crambe's abstract idea of a lord mayor.

As nothing is more flattering to the vanity and indolence of mankind, than the being able to produce a pleasing general effect with little labour or study, so nothing more obstructs the progress of the art than such a facility: yet still these abstracts are by no means without their comparative merit, and they have their use as well as their danger; they shew how much may be effected by the mere

naked principle, and the great superiority *that* alone gives to whatever is formed upon it, over those things which are done on no principle at all; where the separate objects are set down as it were article by article, and where the confusion of lights so perplexes the eye, that one might suppose the artist had looked at them through a multiplying glass.

I may, perhaps, be thought to have dwelt longer on this article than the principal design of my book seemed to require; but though (as I mentioned in a former part) the study of light and shadow appears, at first sight, to belong exclusively to the painter, yet, like every thing which relates to that charming art, it will be found of infinite service to the improver; indeed, the violations of this principle of breadth and harmony of light and shadow are, perhaps, more frequent, and more disgustingly offensive than those of any other.

Some people seem to have a sort of callus over their organs of sight, as others
over

over those of hearing ; and as the callous hearers feel nothing in music but kettle-drums and trombones, so the callous se-ers can only be moved by strong oppositions of black and white, or fiery * reds. I am therefore so far from laughing at Mr. Locke's blind man for likening scarlet to the sound of a trumpet, that I think he had great reason to pride himself (as he did) on the discovery.

The natural colour of brick one might reasonably suppose was sufficiently stimulating ; but I have seen brick houses painted of so much more flaming a red, that (to use Mr. Brown's expression) they put the whole vale in a fever. White, though glaring, has not that hot sultry appearance, and there is such a look of neatness and gaiety in it, that one cannot be surpris'd

* Though red properly belongs to colouring, as it cannot be expressed by a mere black and white drawing or engraving ; yet, where a tint is so glaring as to destroy the harmony of colouring, I am apt to think it will have the same effect on breadth of light and shadow.

if, where lime is cheap, only one idea should prevail—that of making every thing as white as possible. Wherever this is the case, the whole landscape is full of little spots, which can only be made pleasing to a painter's eye by their being almost buried in trees; but where a country is without natural wood, and is improved by dint of * white-wash and clumps of firs,

* I wish to be understood, that when I speak of white-wash and whitened buildings, I mean that glaring white which is produced by lime alone, or without a sufficient quantity of any lowering ingredient; for there cannot be a greater or a more immediate improvement, than that of giving to a fiery brick building the tint of a stone one. No person, I believe, has any doubt that stone (such as Bath and Portland, and many less renowned, under the general name of free-stone) is the most beautiful material for building, and I imagine there is no instance of an architect's having painted such stones white in order to make them more beautiful, though dingy or red stone may sometimes have been painted of a free stone colour. The true object of imitation seems therefore to be the tint of a beautiful stone, and if those who whiten their buildings would pique themselves on matching exactly the colour of Bath or Portland stone, so as to be neither whiter nor yellower, the greatest neatness and gaiety might prevail without glare.

a painter

a painter (were he confined there) would be absolutely driven to despair, and feel ready to renounce, not only his art, but his eyesight.

One of the most charming effects of sunshine is its giving to objects not merely light, but that mellow golden hue, so beautiful in itself, and which, when diffused, as in a fine evening, over the whole landscape, creates that rich union and harmony so enchanting in nature and in Claude; but if either in Claude or in nature any one object should be introduced of so glaring a white as not to partake of that general hue *, the whole attention, in spite

* From that analogy so often mentioned, it is usual to say that an object in a picture or in nature is out of tune. The expression is perfectly just; in music one note out of tune will invincibly fix our attention upon it, and several distract it; and in either case it is impossible to enjoy the harmony of the rest. There is, however, this difference; a passing note out of tune is quickly over, but a glaring object is like an eternal holding note held firmly out of tune, and which, in that

spite of all our efforts to the contrary, will be drawn to that one point; if there are several, the eye will be distracted between them. Again, to consider it in another view; when the sun breaks out in gleams there is something that delights and surprises in seeing an object, before only visible, lit up in splendour, and then gradually sinking into shade again. But a whitened object is already lit up; it remains so when every thing has retired into obscurity; it still forces itself into notice, still impudently stares you in the face.

A cottage of a quiet colour, half concealed among trees, with its bit of garden, its pales and orchard, is one of the most tranquil and soothing of all rural objects, and when the sun strikes upon it, and dis-

case well deserves the name an unmusical friend once gave to holding notes in general; "I don't know what you call them," said he, "I mean one of those long noises."

covers

covers a number of lively picturesque circumstances, one of the most chearful ; but if cleared round and whitened, its modest retired character is gone, and succeeded by a perpetual glare.

Sunshine, when it gilds some object of a sober tint, is like a smile that lights up a serious countenance ; a * whitened object is like the eternal grin of a fool.

Besides the glare, there is another circumstance that often renders white-wash extremely offensive to the eye (especially when it is applied to any uneven surface) and that is, a smeared, cloggy, dirty appearance. This is the case with old or rough stone work dabbed with white, and the black left between the joints ; and

* Even very white teeth (where excess of whiteness is least to be feared) if seen too much, have often a kind of silly look that seems to belong to the part itself : nothing can be more characteristic of that effect, than the well known expression of, the gentleman with the foolish teeth. Those gentlemen who deal much in pure white-wash might well be distinguished by the same compliment being paid to their buildings.

with

with cottages, where the coarse wood-work that separates the plaistered walls is brushed over as well as the smooth walls themselves : in these, however, the object is inconsiderable, and the effect in proportion ; but when this pitiful taste is employed upon some ancient castle-like mansion, or the mossy weather-stained tower of an old church, it becomes a sort of sacrilege. Such a building daubed over and plaistered is, next to a painted old woman, the most disgusting of all attempts at improvement ; on both, when left in their natural state, time often stamps a pleasing and venerable impression ; but when thus sophisticated, they have neither the freshness of youth, nor the mellow picturesque character of age, and instead of becoming attractive, are only made horribly conspicuous.

I am afraid it will not be easy to check the general passion for distinctness and conspicuity. Each prospect hunter (a
 § most

most numerous tribe) like the heroic Ajax, forms but one prayer ;

Ποισον δ' αἰθερην, δος δ' οφθαλμοισιν ιδεσθαι.

Let them see but clearly, and see enough, they are content ; and much may be said in their favour ; composition, grouping, breadth and effect of light and shadow, harmony of colours, &c. are comparatively attended to and enjoyed by few ; but extensive prospects are the most popular of all views, and their respective superiority is generally decided by the number of churches and counties. Distinctness is therefore the great point ; a painter may wish several hills of bad shapes, and thousands of uninteresting acres, to be covered with one general shade ; but to him who is to reckon up his counties, the loss of a black or a white spot, of a clump or a gazabo, is the loss of a voucher.

Then again, as the prospect shewer has great pleasure and vanity in pointing
out

out these vouchers, so the improver, on his side, has full as much in being pointed at, and therefore one cannot wonder that so many hills are marked with these beacons of taste, and so many churches converted into them.

CHAPTER VIII.



I HAVE hitherto endeavoured to trace the picturesque in all that relates to form, and to the effects of light and shade; I have endeavoured to distinguish it from the beautiful and the sublime, and to shew the general influence of breadth on them all. It now remains to examine how far the same general principles hold good with regard to colours. Mr. Burke's idea of the beautiful in colour seems to me in the highest degree satisfactory, and to correspond with all his other ideas of beauty. I must observe at the same time, that the beautiful in colour is of a positive and independent nature, whereas, in that respect, the sublime in colour is in a great degree relative, and depends on other

* circumstances,

circumstances. A beautiful colour is a common and a just expression ; no one hesitates whether he shall give that title to the leaf of a rose, or to the smallest bit of it ; but though the deep gloomy tint of the sky before a storm, and its effect on all nature, is sublime, no one would call that colour (whether a dark blue or purple, or whatever it might be) a sublime colour, if simply shewn him without the other accompaniments.

It is as little the custom to speak of picturesque colours as of sublime ones ; there are many, however, that without impropriety might be called so, as having nothing of the softness, freshness, and delicacy of beauty, but which are generally found in scenes highly picturesque, and admirably accord with them. As that term has usually a reference (though not an exclusive one) to the art from which it is named, so it may be remarked that painters, from having observed the deep, rich, and mellow effects of these colours, have been particularly

particularly fond of introducing them into their pictures, and sometimes to the absolute exclusion of those that are more strictly beautiful; such, for instance, are the brown tints of autumn, many of the various gradations in the tints of soil in broken ground, and in the decayed parts of old trees; such the weather stains, and many of the mosses on stones and trunks of trees, with a thousand more equally distinct from those that are beautiful. If to these are opposed the soft and tender colours of the stems of young trees, the fresh greens of spring both in trees and herbage, its flowers and blossoms, it will shew in how many instances picturesque colours as well as forms arise from age and decay.

Autumn (which is metaphysically applied to the decline of human life, when "fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf") and not the spring, the dolce primavera, gioventù dell' anno, is generally called the painter's season. And yet there is something so very delightful in the real charms
of

of spring, as well as in the associated ideas of the renewal of life and vegetation, that it seems a perversion of our natural feelings to prefer to all its blooming hopes the first bodings of the approach of winter.

Autumn must therefore have very powerful attractions, though of a different kind, and which must be intimately connected with the art of painting; for that reason, as the picturesque (though equally founded in nature with the beautiful) has been pointed out, illustrated, and as it were brought into light by that art, an inquiry into the reasons why autumn, and not spring, is called the painter's season, will, I imagine, give great additional insight into the distinct characters of the picturesque and the beautiful, especially with regard to colour.

If there is any thing in the universal range of the arts that is peculiarly required to be a whole, it is a picture: in pieces of music, particular movements may, without injury, be separated from
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the whole, and in every species of poetry, and of writing in general, detached scenes, episodes, stanzas, &c. may be considered and enjoyed by themselves; nor, indeed, is it every mind that, in the progress of a work of any length, can observe and retain the connection of the different parts, and their dependance on each other: But in a picture, the forms, tints, lights and shadows; all their combinations, effects, agreements, and oppositions, are at once subjected to the eye, all at one glance brought into comparison; and, therefore, however beautiful particular colours may be—however gay and brilliant the lights—if they want union, breadth, and harmony, the picture wants its most essential quality—it is not a whole. According to my ideas, therefore, it is from this circumstance of union and harmony, joined to that of richness, depth, and mellowness of tint, that the decaying charms of autumn often triumph, in the painter's eye, over the fresh and blooming beauties of spring.

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The

The colours of spring deserve the name of beauty in the truest sense of the word; they have every thing that gives us that idea; freshness, gaiety, and liveliness, with softness and delicacy. Their beauty, indeed, is of all others the most universally acknowledged; so much so, that from them every comparison and illustration of beauty is taken.

The earlier trees, besides the freshness of their colour, have a remarkable lightness and transparency without nakedness; their new foliage serves as a decoration, not as a concealment, and through it the forms of their limbs are seen as those of the human body under a thin drapery; a thousand quivering lights play around and amidst their branches in every direction, even into the innermost parts of the woods. The circumstances that most peculiarly distinguish trees at this season are characterized by Mr. Gray, in two lines of his beautiful lyric fragment:

And lightly o'er the living scene
Scatters his tenderest, freshest green.

It seems to me, that from these two lines, in which the beauties of the early foliage have been selected with such admirable taste and accuracy, may also be collected the reasons why those beauties are in general less happily adapted to painting.

In order to produce a whole, painters deal very much in broad masses; these are rarely compatible with a *general* air of lightness, still less with what is scattered.

One might naturally suppose that fresh and tender greens, which are so pleasing in nature to every eye, would be equally so on the canvas; and so they often are when balanced by other tints, but not when lightly scattered, and over the *general* scene. Freshness, in one sense, is simply coolness, and I believe that idea in some degree almost always accompanies it; and though in nature real sunshine (and possibly from its real warmth as well as its splendour) may give a glow and animation to a landscape entirely green, yet nothing is more difficult in painting, or

more rarely attempted; for who would confine himself to cold monotony, when all nature is full of examples of the greatest variety with the most perfect harmony?

As the green of spring, from its comparative coldness, is less favourable to landscape than the warm and mellow tints of autumn, in like manner its flowers and blossoms, from their too distinct and splendid variety, are apt to produce a glare and spottiness so destructive of that union and harmony which is the very essence of a picture either in nature or imitation.

Whatever objects most strongly attract the eye are of course most apt to create spots, and consequently none more so than * white objects; and it is greatly on that account that water so particularly re-

* I must beg leave to refer the reader to some remarks on this subject by Mr. Lock in Mr. Gilpin's Tour down the Wye, page 97, and which I should have inserted here were not that book in every person's hands.

It is impossible to read those remarks without regretting that the observations of a mind so capable of enlightening the public should be withheld from it; a regret which those who have enjoyed the pleasure and advantage of his conversation feel in a much higher degree.

quires

quires the accompaniment of trees, as they take off from the glare of its whiteness. I therefore have often thought that the expression of a fine *sheet* of water, which is always meant and taken as a compliment, is a very just satire on those naked, glaring imitations (if they be so called) of lakes and rivers.

A tree or bush covered with white blossoms suggests the same idea of a white sheet thrown over them; and white sheets scattered about a landscape would not very readily unite with other objects.

The apple blossoms, whose colours when seen near, and when their different shades and gradations can be distinguished, are so beautiful; at a distance lose all their richness and variety: they appear only red, glaring, and spotty; and the effect of a great number of orchards of pears, apples, and cherries in full blow, strongly proves that red and white ought never to predominate in the * general landscape.

In

* Having heard that at the time of the blow the whole county of Hereford looked like a garden, I many years

In the opening of spring also, the contrast is too strong between the early trees in all their freshness of leaves, and gaiety of blossoms, and the lifeless boughs of the oak or ash; and no painter *, I believe, has

ago came down at that season expecting to be in raptures. My disappointment was equal to my expectation, when I crossed the Malvern hills, and saw the country spread out before me; it answered indeed to the description, and did look like a garden; but from that time I have never wished to see a garden of several hundred acres.

* It must not however be concluded from what has been said, that the painter has no pleasure in any set of objects unless they make a picture; the charms of spring are universally felt, and he enjoys them in common with all mankind, unless he has narrowed his mind by that art which ought most to have enlarged it. But then his enjoyment is greatly heightened and varied when the blossoms and flowers of spring are so mixed in and grouped with the earlier deciduous trees, with evergreens, with buildings, and other objects, that the glare and gaudiness is taken away while the gaiety remains. All such combinations as form pictures (that is, in other words, where the forms and colours are most happily balanced and connected) are only new sources of pleasure added to the general ones; they are also pleasures that may be dwelt upon and returned to after the first enchanting but vague delight of spring is diminished.

Such

has ever deserved to have it said of him,
that like Mezentius,

Mortua quinetiam jungebat corpora vivis.

These seem to me the principal beauties and defects of the *earlier* part of spring, at which time however the change is most striking: as the season advances, and the leaves are more and more expanded, they no longer retain that vernal hue, that gloss of youth; and the trees in the height of summer lose perhaps as much in the freshness, variety, and lightness of their foliage, as they gain in the general fullness of it, and the superior size of their leaves.

Such indeed are the charms of reviving nature, that he who does not feel them, and feel them with rapture, because in many cases they are less suited to pictures, must have a very pedantic love of painting. The profusion of fresh, gay, and beautiful colours, and of sweets, united with the ideas of fruitfulness, have altogether an effect similar to that of the sublime; they absorb for the moment all other considerations, and on a genial day in spring, and in a place where all its charms are displayed, one feels the full force of that exclamation of Adam, when he first wakened to the pleasure of existence:

"With fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflow'd."

L 4 The

The Midsummer shoot relieves the uniform green that immediately precedes it; in many trees (and in none more than the oak) the effect is singularly beautiful; the old foliage forms a dark back ground, on which the new appears relieved and detached in all its freshness and brilliancy; it is spring engrafted upon summer. This effect, however, is confined to the nearer objects; the great general change in all vegetation from the green of summer is produced by the first frosts of autumn. Then begins that variety of rich glowing tints, which, at the early period of their change, so admirably accord with each other, and form so splendid a whole; so superior in depth and richness to those of any other part of the year.

It has often struck me, that the whole system of the Venetian colouring (particularly that of Giorgione and Titian, which has been the great object of imitation) was formed upon the tints of autumn; and from thence their pictures have that golden hue which gives them (as Sir Joshua Reynolds

Reynolds observes) such a superiority over all others. Their trees, foregrounds, and every part of their landscapes, have, more strongly than those of any other painters, the deep and rich browns of that season. The same general hue prevails in the draperies of their figures, and even in their * flesh, which has neither the silver purity of Guido, nor the freshness of Rubens, but a glow perhaps more enchanting than either. Sir Joshua has remarked, that the silver purity of Guido is more suited to beauty than that glowing golden hue of Titian: it was natural for him to mention Guido as being the painter who had most succeeded in beauty of form; but with

* A strong proof of this is in the Ganymede of Titian, in the Colonna palace, to which, by the order of the old cardinal, Carlo Maratt put a new sky of the same tone as those in his own pictures; and one may say, that none but such a cold insipid artist could have borne to execute what such gross unfeeling ignorance had commanded: such a sky would have been a severe trial to the flesh of any warm picture, but it makes that of the Ganymede appear almost black; which certainly would not have been the case if it had been painted by Rubens or Correggio,

less

less of that purity and evenness of tint, there is a freshness in that of Rubens which would admirably accord with beauty, though there are but few instances in his works of such a union.

It seems to me that if any one of the qualities which Mr. Burke has so justly given as essential to beauty is more essential than the others, it is freshness; and it is that which makes the most distinct line of separation between the beautiful and the picturesque in colouring*. I should on that account be inclined to call the Venetian style of colouring, and that of Mola, of Dom. Feti, and others who have imitated it, the picturesque style, as

* Claude always mixed a much larger proportion of cool, fresh colours in his landscapes than the Venetians did in theirs. In some of his early pictures, those cool tints prevail too much, and give them a cold sickly appearance; his best works, however, are entirely free from that as well as the opposite defect, and his authority for the due proportion of cool and warm colours which beauty requires, is as high as any man's can be; for no one studied beauty more diligently, more successfully, or for a greater number of years.

being

being formed upon the deep and glowing tints of autumn, and not upon the fresh and delicate colours of spring; and although this Venetian colouring may not upon the whole be so congenial to the sublime as the severer styles of the Roman and Florentine schools, yet it is infinitely more so than the fresher and more sensual style of * Rubens, or the silvery tone of Guido, and in that accords with the general character of the picturesque, more readily mixing with the sublime than the beautiful does. Sometimes also very grand effects are produced by means of those broken tints, that corruption of colours, as it is termed, which would not have been produced by the cutting ones of the Roman school, such

* Rubens seems to have had such delight in *beauty* of tint, as often to have placed it where one of a coarser kind would have been more in character. I remember observing, in that wonderful sketch of a battle on a bridge in the Orleans collection, the knee of a robust foldier of so beautiful a carnation, blended with such pure white, as is only seen in the most delicate woman's complexion,

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as are seen in the * back-grounds and skies of Titian.

Many of Rubens's works have quite the freshness of the early season of the year ; and the whole of that well-known picture of the Duke of Rutland's has the spring-like hue of those flowers he has with so gay and spring-like a profusion (but still with a painter's judgment) thrown about it. But when Titian introduces flowers, they also are made to accord with his general principle ; they are not the children of spring ; they seem to belong to a later season ; and he spreads over them an autumnal hue and atmosphere that would make even Rubens's flowers (much more those of a mere flower painter) look raw in comparison.

This leads me to observe, that it is not

* That, for instance, in the St. Margaret, at Lord Harcourt's, at Nuneham. Those of Rubens and Vandike are frequently very grand where the subject required it, and in that respect they made Titian and the Venetians their model.

only the change of vegetation that gives to autumn that golden hue, but also the atmosphere itself, and the lights and shadows which then prevail. In September and October the sun describes a much lower circle above the horizon than in May and April; and consequently gives broader lights and shadows during a much larger portion of the day, and more resembling those which are produced at the close of it *. The very characters of the sky and the atmosphere are of a piece with those of the two seasons: in spring, light and flitting clouds, with shadows equally flitting and uncertain; refreshing showers, with gay and genial bursts of sunshine, that seem suddenly to call forth and nou-

* In winter, when that circle is most contracted, even the mid-day lights and shadows, from their horizontal direction, are so striking, and the parts so finely illuminated, and yet so connected and filled up by them, that one forgets the nakedness of the trees from admiration of the general masses. In summer, the exact reverse is as often the case; the rich cloathing of the parts makes a faint impression from the vague and general glare of light without shadow.

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rich the young buds and flowers. In autumn all is matured, and the rich hues of the ripened fruits and of the changing foliage are rendered still more so by the warm haze which often, on a fine day in that season, spreads the last varnish over every part of the picture.

CHAPTER IX.

I HAVE endeavoured, to the best of my abilities, and according to the observations I have made in a long habit of reflection on the subject, to trace the ideas we have of the picturesque through the different works of art and nature; and it appears to me, that in all objects of sight, in buildings, trees, water, ground, in the human species, and in other animals, the same general principles uniformly prevail, and that even light and shadow, and colours, have the strongest conformity to those principles. I have compared both its causes and effects with those of the sublime and the beautiful; I have shewn its distinctness from them both, and in what that distinctness consists.

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Of

Of these three characters, beauty is that which most nearly interests us, and it is singular that two of those who have most studied it, and best written upon it, should so widely differ in their ideas, that the one should make beauty, and the other ugliness, proceed from the same cause. Mr. Burke has observed, * “ that the idea of variation, without attending so accurately to the *manner* of the variation, has led Mr. Hogarth to consider angular figures as beautiful.”

Though I have never happened to meet with this position (so contrary to Hogarth's general system) in the analysis of beauty, I have no doubt of Mr. Burke's accuracy; and I can easily conceive, that a painter like Hogarth, who had observed the rich and splendid effects produced by sudden variations, should call angles beautiful. Mr. Burke has, I think, clearly shewn that idea to be founded on

* Sublime and Beautiful, page 216.

false principles; but I also think that he himself, had he thought it worth his while to investigate so ungrateful a subject as ugliness with the same accuracy he has that of beauty, would hardly have reckoned those objects the *ugliest* which approach most nearly to * angular, for in that case the leaves of the vine and plane would be among the ugliest of the vegetable kingdom.

It seems to me that mere unmixed ugliness does not arise from sharp angles, or from any sudden variation, but rather from that *want* of form, that unshapen lumpish appearance, which, perhaps, no one word exactly expresses; a quality that never can be mistaken for beauty, never can adorn it, and which is equally unconnected with the sublime and the picturesque. In Latin, *forma* is sometimes used singly for beauty, and seems to signify that beauty is form in its most ex-

* Sublime and Beautiful, page 217.

quisitely finished state, when the last touches of the master's hand have left nothing to add, nothing to diminish—such as we find in the most perfect Grecian sculpture. But were an artist to model, in any soft material, a head from the Venus or the Apollo, and then by way of experiment to make the nose longer or sharper—rising more suddenly towards the middle,—or strongly aquiline; were he to give a striking projection to the eyebrow,—or to break the outline of the face into angles,—though he would destroy beauty, yet he might create character, and something grand or picturesque might be produced by such a trial. But let him take the contrary method, let him clog and fill up all those nicely marked variations, of whose happy union and connection beauty is the result, and ugliness, and that only, must be the consequence. Were he afterwards to place warts and carbuncles on the nose, or any other unnatural wens and excrescencies on the face; were

were he to twist the mouth, or make the nose awry, or of an enormous size, he would then add deformity to ugliness.

Deformity is to ugliness what picturesqueness is to beauty; though distinct from it, and in many cases arising from opposite causes, it is often mistaken for it, often accompanies it, and greatly heightens its effect. Ugliness alone is merely disagreeable; when any striking deformity is added, it becomes hideous; when terror, sublime. All these are mixed in the

Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum.

Milton, in his description of death, has left out the deformity that is usual in the representation of that king of terrors*, possibly from judging that the distinctness of deformity would take off from

* *That deformity is only such with respect to the human body in its perfect state; death being constantly painted as a skeleton, that must be considered as his natural form.*

that mysterious uncertainty which has rendered his picture so awfully sublime :

The other shape,
If shape it might be called, which shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,
Or substance might be call'd, which shadow seem'd,
For each seem'd either; black it stood as night,
Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,
And shook a dreadful dart; what seem'd his head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.

Some of those who think that all beauty depends on flowing lines have criticised the Grecian nose as being too strait, and forming too sharp an angle with the rest of the face : Whether the Greek artists were right or not, it clearly shews it was their opinion that strait and cutting lines, and what nearly approached to angles, were not only compatible with beauty, but that the effect of the whole would from thence be more attractive than by a continual sweep and flow of outline in every part *.

* The application of this to modern gardening is too obvious to be enforced. It is the highest of all authority against continual flow of outline, even where beauty of form is the only object.

Those hills and mountains which nearly approach to angles are often called beautiful, seldom, I believe, ugly; and when distance has softened their roughness, brownness, and apparent bulk, they accord with the softest and most pleasing scenes, and form the distance of some of Claude's most polished landscapes: The ugliest forms (if my ideas are just) are those lumpish, and, as it were, unformed hills, such, for instance, as, from one of the ugliest and most shapeless animals, are called pig-backed: When the summits of any of these are notched into paltry divisions, or have such insignificant risings upon them as appear like knobs or bumps, or when any improver has imitated those knobs and knotches, by means of patches and clumps, they are then both ugly and deformed.

The same distinctions hold good in trees; the ugliest forms are not those whose branches make sudden angles, (for they are often highly picturesque,) but

such shapeless ones as we see in trees that have been pressed by others, or in stripped or pollard ones that have just begun to recover; in these last (while the marks of the axe are still visible) that most horrid of all deformity, occasioned by mangled limbs, added to ugliness, makes them the most disgusting of all inanimate objects; they bring to our mind the shocking spectre of Deiphobus :

Priamiden toto laniatum corpore vidi.

The ugliest ground is that which has neither the beauty of smoothness, verdure, and gentle undulation, nor the picturesque of bold and sudden breaks, and varied tints of soil: of such kind is ground that has been disturbed and left in that unfinished state, as in a rough ploughed field run to sward; such the slimy shores of a flat tide river, or the stony one of a mountain torrent when it descends into the plain. The steep shores of rivers, where the tide rises at times to a great height, and leaves promontories and caves
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of slime; and those on which torrents among the mountains leave huge shapeless heaps of stones, may certainly lay claim to some mixture of deformity, which is often mistaken for another character. Nothing, indeed, is more common than to hear persons who come from a tame cultivated country (and not those only) mistake barrenness, desolation, and deformity, for grandeur and picturesqueness *.

* One might suppose, on the other hand, that the being continually among picturesque scenes would of itself, and without any assistance from pictures, lead to a distinguishing taste for them. Unfortunately it often leads to a perfect indifference for that style, and to a liking for something directly opposite.

I once walked over a very romantic place in Wales with the proprietor, and strongly expressed how much I was struck with it, and, among the rest, with several natural cascades. He was quite uneasy at the pleasure I felt, and seemed afraid I should waste my admiration. "Don't stop at these things," said he, "I will shew you by and by one worth seeing." At last we came to a part where the brook was conducted down three long steps of hewn stone: "There," said he, with great triumph, "that was made by Edwards, who built Pont y pridd, and it is reckoned as neat a piece of mason-work as any in the county."

Deformity in ground is indeed less obvious than in other objects: deformity seems to be something that did not originally belong to the object in which it exists; something strikingly and unnaturally disagreeable, and not softened by those circumstances which often make it picturesque. The side of a smooth green hill torn by floods may at first very properly be called deformed, and on the same principle (though not with the same impression) as a gash on a living animal. When the rawness of such a gash in the ground is softened, and in part concealed and ornamented by the effects of time and the progress of vegetation, deformity, by this usual process, is converted into picturesqueness; and this is the case with quarries, gravel-pits, &c. which at first are deformities, and which, in their most picturesque state, are often considered as such by a levelling improver. Large heaps of mould or stones, when they appear strongly, and without any connection or concealment,

concealment, above the surface of the ground, may also at first be considered as deformities, and may equally become picturesque by the same process.

This connection between picturesqueness and deformity cannot be too much studied by improvers, and, among other reasons, from motives of œconomy. There are in many places deep hollows and broken ground not immediately in view, and that do not interfere with any sweep of lawn which must be kept open. To fill up and level these would often be difficult and expensive; to dress and adorn them costs little trouble or money. Even in the most smooth and polished scenes they may often be so marked by plantations, and so united with them, as to blend with the general scenery at a distance, and to produce great novelty and variety when approached.

With regard to hills and mountains, their symmetry and proportions are not indeed marked out and ascertained like
those

those of the human figure; but the general principles of beauty and ugliness, of picturesqueness and deformity, are easily to be traced in them, though not in so striking and obvious a manner.

In buildings, and all artificial objects, the same effects are produced by the same means. Whatever is neatly finished, and the form (whatever it may be) accurately expressed, will be less *ugly* than the same style of form executed in a slovenly and unfinished manner. A new brick-wall, for instance, is less ugly, though perhaps more unpicturesque, than a mud-wall; a brick-cottage than a mud one. A clump of brick no one will deny to be completely ugly, and it is melancholy to reflect how many houses in this kingdom are built upon that model; the chief difference, and that which makes them a degree less ugly, is the sharpness of their angles.

With respect to colours, it appears to me that as transparency is one essential quality of beauty, so the want of that
transpa-

transparency, or what may be termed mud-
diness, is the most general and efficient
cause of ugliness. A colour, for instance,
may be harsh, glaring, or tawdry, and yet
please many eyes, and by some be called
beautiful, but a muddy colour no one
ever was pleased with, or gave that title to.
If this idea of ugliness in colour is just, it
very much strengthens what I have before
remarked with respect to form; for in that
ugliness is said to arise from clogging those
nicely marked variations which produce
beauty, and in this it will in a similar
manner arise from clogging, thickening,
and altering the nice proportion and ar-
rangement of those particles, whatever they
be, which produce clearness and beauty
of colour *.

Ugliness, like beauty, has no prominent
features; it is in some degree regular and

* I am here speaking of colours considered separately;
not of those numberless beauties and effects which
are produced by their numberless connections and
oppositions.

uniform,

uniform, and at a distance, and even on a slight inspection, is not immediately striking. Deformity, like picturesqueness, makes a quicker and most distant impression, and strongly rouses the attention. On this principle ugly music is what is composed according to rule and common proportion, but which has neither that selection of sweet and flowing melody which answers to the beautiful, nor that marked character, that variety, those sudden and masterly changes which correspond with the picturesque. If such music be executed in the same style in which it is composed, it will cause no strong emotion; but if played out of tune it will become deformed, and every such deformity will make the musical hearer start. The enraged musician stops both his ears against the *deformity* of those sounds which Hogarth has so powerfully conveyed to us through another sense, as almost to justify the bold expression of Æschylus, *δεδορνα φωνην*. Apply this to the other sense; mere ugliness

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is looked upon without any violent emotion, but deformity in any strong degree would probably cause the same sort of action in the beholder as in Hogarth's musician, by making him afraid to trust singly to those means of exclusion which nature has placed over the sight.

The effects of the picturesque, when mixed with the sublime or the beautiful, have been already considered: It will be found as frequently mixed with ugliness, and its effects when so mixed to be perfectly consistent with all that has been mentioned of its effects and qualities. Ugliness, like beauty, in itself is not picturesque, for it has, simply considered, no strongly marked features; but when the last-mentioned character is added either to beauty or to ugliness, they become more striking and varied, and whatever may be the sensations they excite, they always, by means of that addition, more strongly attract the attention. We are amused and occupied by ugly objects if they are also picturesque, just as we are by a rough,
and

and in other respects a disagreeable mind, provided it has a marked and peculiar character ; without it, mere outward ugliness, or mere inward rudeness, are simply disagreeable.

An ugly man or woman with an aquiline nose, high cheek bones, beetle brows, and strong lines in every part of the face, will, from these picturesque circumstances (which might all be taken away without destroying ugliness) be much more *strikingly* ugly than a man with no more features than an oyster. Such ugliness, like beauty, when a milder degree and style of the picturesque is added to it, is more diversified, more amusing, as well as more striking ; and when these circumstances of disgust, which often attend reality, are softened and disguised, as in the drama, by imitation, picturesque ugliness (to which title it has just as good a right as to that of beauty) becomes a source of pleasure. He who has been used to admire such picturesque ugliness in painting, will from the same causes look with pleasure (for we have

have no other word to express the degree or character of that sensation) at the original in nature; and one cannot think slightly of the power and advantage of that art which makes its admirers often gaze with such delight on some antient lady, as with the help of a little vanity might perhaps lead her to mistake the motive *.

As the excess of those qualities which chiefly constitute beauty produces insipidity, so likewise the excess of those which constitute picturesqueness produces deformity. Though these mutual relations may perhaps be sufficiently obvious in inanimate objects, yet as every thing that relates to beauty strikes us more forcibly in

* A celebrated anatomist is said to have declared, that he had received in his life more pleasure from *dead* than from *living* women. This might perhaps be brought as a parallel instance of perverted taste; but I never heard of any painter's having made the same declaration with respect to age and youth. Whatever may be the future refinements of painting and anatomy, I believe young and live women will never have reason to be jealous of old or dead rivals.

OUR

our own species, the progress of that excess towards insipidity on one side, and towards deformity on the other, will be more clearly perceived if we observe what its effects would be on the human countenance, and if we suppose the *general* form of the countenance to remain the same, and only what may be considered as the *accompaniments* to be changed.

Suppose then (what is no uncommon stile or degree of beauty) a woman with fine features, but the character of whose eyes, eyebrows, hair, and complexion, are more striking and showy than delicate: imagine then the same features, with the eyebrows less marked, and both those and the hair of the head of a softer texture;—the general glow of complexion changed to a more delicate gradation of white and red,—the skin more smooth and even,—and the eyes of a milder colour and expression: you would by this change take off from the striking, the showy effect; but such a face would have more of that finished delicacy which even those who might prefer

fer the other stile would allow to be more in unison with the idea of beauty, and the other would appear comparatively coarse and unfinished. If we go on still farther, and suppose hardly any mark of eyebrow;—the hair, from the lightness of its colour, and from the silky softness of its quality, giving scarce any idea of roughness;—the complexion of a pure and almost transparent whiteness, with hardly a tinge of red;—the eyes of the mildest blue, and the expression equally mild,—you would then approach very nearly to insipidity, but still without destroying beauty; on the contrary, such a form, when irradiated by a mind of equal sweetness and purity, united with sensibility, has something angelic, and seems farther removed from what is earthly and material. This shews how much softness, smoothness, and delicacy, even when carried to an extreme degree, are congenial to beauty: on the other hand it must be owned, that where the only agreement between such a form and

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the soul that inhabits it is want of character and animation, nothing can be more completely vapid than the whole composition.

If now we return to the same point from whence we began, and conceive the eyebrows *more* strongly marked—the hair rougher in its effect and quality—the complexion more dusky and gipsy-like—the skin of a coarser grain, with some moles on it—a degree of cast in the eyes, but so slight as only to give archness and peculiarity of countenance—this, without altering the proportion of the features, would take off from beauty what it gave to character and picturesqueness. If we go one step farther, and encrease the eyebrows to a preposterous size—the cast into a squint—make the skin scarred and pitted with the small pox—the complexion full of spots—and encrease the moles into excrescencies,—it will plainly appear how close the connection is between beauty and insipidity, and between picturesqueness

ness and deformity, and what “thin partitions do their bounds divide.”

The whole of this applies most exactly to improvements: the general features of a place remain the same, the accompaniments only are changed, but with them its character. If the improver (as it usually happens) attends solely to verdure, smoothness, undulation of ground, and flowing lines, the whole will be insipid. If, on the contrary (what is much more rare) the opposite taste should prevail; should an improver, by way of being picturesque, make broken ground, coves, and quarries all about his place; encourage nothing but furze, briars, and thistles; heap quantities of rude stones on his banks, or, to crown all, like Mr. Kent, plant dead trees; the deformity of such a place would, I believe, be very generally allowed, though the insipidity of the other might not be so readily confessed.

I may here remark, that though picturesque and deformity are so strictly

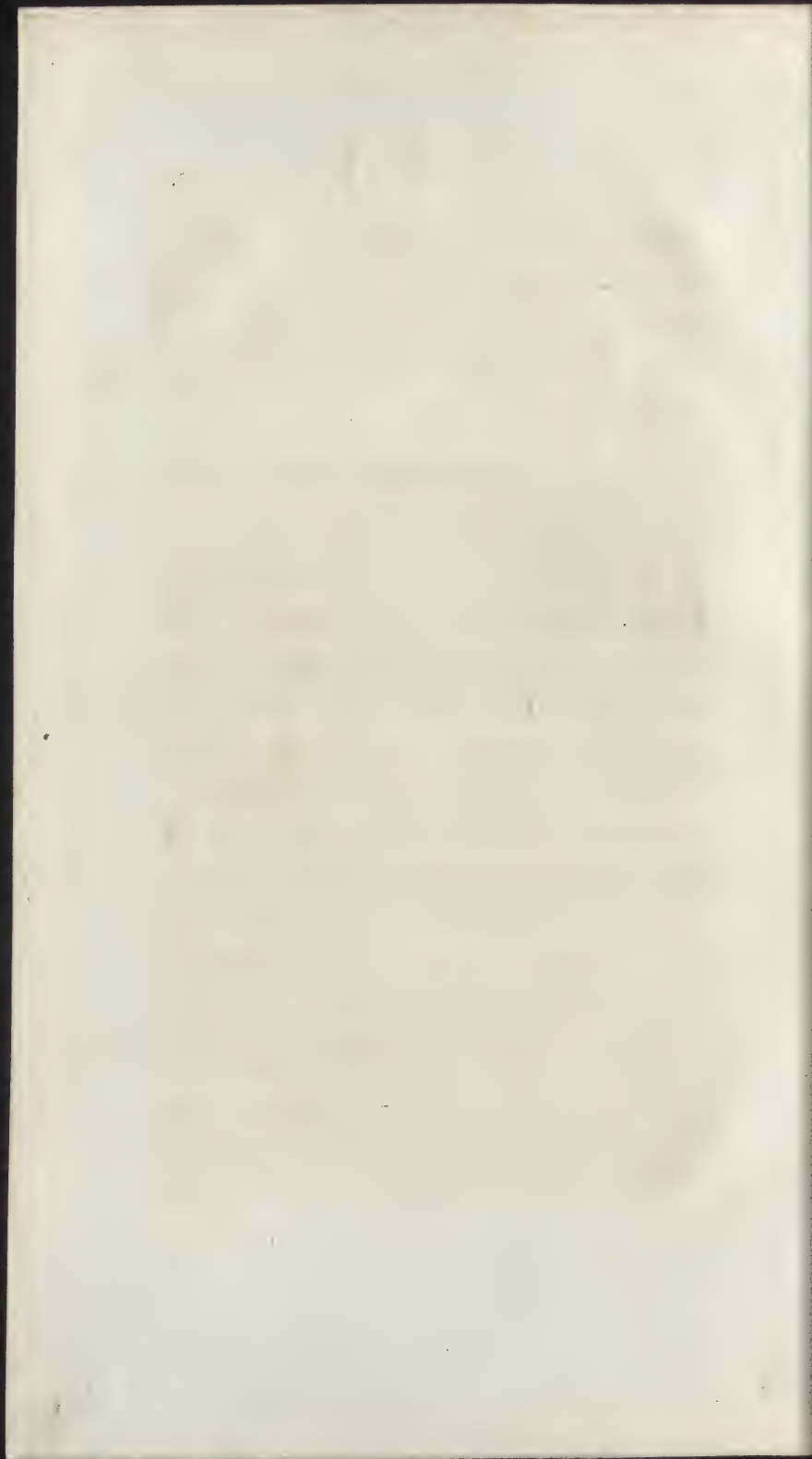
confined to the sense of seeing, yet that there is in the other senses a most exact resemblance to their effects; this is the case not only in the sense of hearing (of which so many examples have been given) but in the more contracted ones of tasting and smelling, and the progress I have mentioned is in them also equally plain and obvious. It can hardly be doubted that what answers to the beautiful in the sense of tasting has smoothness and sweetness for its basis, with such a degree of stimulus as enlivens but does not overbalance those qualities; such, for instance, as in the most delicious fruits and liquors. Take away the stimulus, they become insipid; encrease it so as to overbalance those qualities, they then gain a peculiarity of flavour, are eagerly sought after by those who have acquired a relish for them, but are less adapted to the general palate. This corresponds exactly with the picturesque; but if the stimulus be encreased beyond that point, none but depraved and

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vitiating

vitiated palates will endure what would be so justly termed deformity in objects of sight *. The sense of smelling has in this, as in all other respects, the closest conformity to that of tasting.

* The old maxim of the schools, *de gustibus non est disputandum*, is by many extended to all tastes, and claimed as a sort of privilege not to have any of their's called in question. It is certainly very reasonable that a man should be allowed to indulge his eye as well as his palate in his own way; but if he happens to have a taste for water-gruel without salt, he should not force it upon his guests as the perfection of cookery, or burn their insides, if, like the king of Prussia, he loved nothing but what was spiced enough to turn a living man into a mummy.



P A R T II.

HAVING now examined the chief qualities that in such various ways render objects interesting; and having shewn how much the beauty, spirit, and effect of landscape, real or imitated, depends upon a due mixture of rough and smooth, of warm and cool tints; and of what extreme consequence variety and intricacy are in those as well as our other pleasures; having shewn too that the general principles of improving are in reality the same as those of painting, I shall next enquire how far the principles of the last-mentioned art (clearly the best qualified to improve and refine our ideas of nature)

have been attended to by improvers, and how far also those who first produced, and those who have continued the present system, were capable of applying them, even if they had wished to do so.

It appears from Mr. Walpole's very ingenious and entertaining Treatise on Modern Gardening, that Kent was the first who introduced that so much admired change from the old system to the present one, the whole of which change, and all that has proceeded from it, is comprised in half a line of Horace :

Mutat quadratâ rotundis.

Kent, it is true, was by profession a painter as well as an improver ; but he may serve as an example how little a certain degree of mechanical practice will qualify its possessor to direct the taste of a nation in either of those arts.

The most enlightened judge, both of his own art and of all that relates to it, is a painter of a liberal and comprehensive
mind,

mind, who has added extensive observation and reflection to practical execution; and if to that he adds also the power of expressing his ideas clearly and forcibly in words, the most capable of enlightening others. To such a rare combination we owe Sir Joshua Reynolds's discourses, the most original and impressive work that ever was published on his, or possibly on any other art. On the other hand, nothing so contracts the mind as a little practical dexterity, unassisted and uncorrected by general knowledge and observation, and by a study of the great masters of the art. An artist, whose mind has been so contracted, refers every thing to his own narrow circle of ideas and execution *, and wishes to confine within that circle all the rest of mankind.

Mr.

* I remember a gentleman, who played very prettily on the flute, abusing all Handel's music, and to give me every advantage, like a generous adversary, he defied me to name one good chorus of his writing. It may well be supposed that I did not accept the challenge; c'etoit bien

Mr. Walpole, by a few characteristic anecdotes, has made us perfectly acquainted with Kent; a painter, who, from being used to plant young beeches, introduced them, almost exclusively, into his landscapes, and who, even in his designs for Spencer (whose scenes were so often laid—*infra l'ombrose piante d'antica selva*) still kept to his little beeches, must have had a more paltry mind than falls to the common lot; it must also have been as perverse as it was paltry; for as he *painted* trees without form, so he *planted* them without life, and seems to have imagined *that* alone would compensate for want of bulk, of age, and of grandeur of character *. These dead trees were probably placed

bien l'embarras des richesses; and indeed he was right in his own way of considering them, for there is not one that would do well for his instrument.

* It is almost impossible to remove a large old tree, with all its branches, spurs, and appendages; and without such qualities as greatness of size, joined to an air of grandeur, and of high antiquity, a dead tree should seldom be *left* in a conspicuous place; to entitle it to such a station,

placed where they would attract the eye ; for it is rare that any improver wishes to conceal his efforts. Some other parts of his practice I shall have occasion to consider hereafter,

No professor of high reputation seems to have appeared after him, till at length, that the system might be carried to its ne plus ultra (no very distant point) arose the famous Mr. Brown, who has so fixed and determined the forms and lines of clumps, belts, and serpentine canals, and has been so steadily imitated by his followers, that had the improvers been incorporated, their common seal, with a clump, a belt, and a piece of made water, would have fully expressed the whole of their science, and have served for a model as well as a seal *.

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a station, it should be "majestic even in ruin." A dead tree that could be moved, would, from that very circumstance, be unfit for moving.

* What Ariosto says of a grove of cypresses has always struck me in looking at made places,

—che parean d'una *stampa* tutte impresse.

They

It is very unfortunate that this great legislator of our national taste, and whose laws still remain in force, should not have received from nature, or have acquired by education, more enlarged ideas. Claude Lorraine was bred a pastry-cook, but in every thing that regards his art as a painter he had an elevated and comprehensive mind; nor in any part of his works can one trace the meanness of his original occupation. Mr. Brown was bred a gardener, and having nothing of the mind or the eye of a painter, he formed his style (or rather his plan) upon the model of a parterre, and transferred its minute beauties, its little

They seem "cast in one mould, made in one frame;" so much so, that I have seen places on which large sums had been lavished, unite so little with the landscape around them, that they gave me the idea of having been made by contract in London, and then sent down in pieces, and put together on the spot.

Buying taste ready made is a good deal like buying love ready made, and almost as common: I should suppose too that the enjoyment of both the purchasers is much upon a par.

clumps,

clumps, knots, and patches of flowers, the oval belt that surrounds it, and all its twists and crincum crancums, to the great scale of nature*.

We

* This ingenious device of magnifying a parterre calls to my mind a story I heard many years ago. A country parson, in the county where I live, speaking of a gentleman of low stature, but of extremely pompous manners, who had just left the company, exclaimed, in the simplicity and admiration of his heart, "quite grandeur in miniature, I protest." This compliment reversed, would perfectly suit the shreds and patches that are so often stuck about by Mr. Brown and his followers, amidst the noble scenes they disfigure, where they are as contemptible and as much out of character as Claude's first edifices in pastry would appear in the dignified landscapes he has painted.

When I blame Mr. Brown for having transferred the minutiae of a parterre to the great scale of nature, it is not because they are little in size, but in character. There is indeed no more common error than that of mistaking greatness of size for greatness of manner; it continually happens that the smallest class of rocks, mountains, cascades, lakes, &c. have infinitely more grandeur of stile, and afford more dignified subjects to a painter;

We have, indeed, made but a poor progress by changing the formal but simple and majestic avenue for the thin circular verge called a belt, and the unpretending ugliness of the strait for the affected sameness of the serpentine canal: But the great distinguishing feature of modern improvement is the *clump*; whose name, if the first letter was taken away, would most accurately describe its form and effect. Were it made the object of study how to contrive something that under the name of ornament should disfigure whole districts; nothing could be imagined that would answer that purpose like a clump. Natural groups being formed by trees of different ages and sizes, and at different distances from each other, often too of a

painter, than others of three times their magnitude. Indeed, if a certain elevation of character is wanting, mere magnitude, in many cases, only creates disgust; nothing is more contemptible than a tame giant.—
 “ Bulk without spirit vast.”

mixture

mixture of timber trees with thorns, hollies, and others of inferior growth, are full of variety in their outlines; and from the same causes no two groups are exactly alike. But clumps, from the trees being generally of the same age and growth, planted nearly at the same distance in a circular form, and from each tree being equally pressed by his neighbour, are as like each other as so many puddings turned out of one common mould. Natural groupes also, from the causes I have mentioned, are full of openings and hollows; of trees advancing before, or retiring behind each other; all productive of intricacy and of variety of deep shadows and brilliant lights. The others are lumps. In walking about a natural group, the form of it changes at each step; new combinations, new lights and shades, new inlets present themselves in succession. But clumps, like compact bodies of soldiers, resist attacks from all quarters:

quarters : examine them in every point of view ; walk round and round them ; no opening, no vacancy, no stragglers *, but in the true military character, ils font face partout.

The next leading feature to the clump in this circular system (and which, in romantic situations, rivals it in the power of creating deformity) is the belt. Its sphere, however, is more contracted : Clumps, placed like beacons on the summits of hills, alarm the picturesque traveller many miles off, and warn him of his approach to the enemy ; the belt lies more in ambushade, and the wretch who falls into it, and is obliged to walk the

* I remember hearing, that when Mr. Brown was high-sheriff, some facetious person observing his attendants straggling, called out to him, " Clump your javelin men." What was intended merely as a piece of ridicule might have served as a very instructive lesson to the object of it, and have taught Mr. Brown that such figures should be confined to bodies of men drilled for the purposes of formal parade, and not extended to the loose and airy shapes of vegetation.

whole

whole round in company with the improver, will allow that a snake with its tail in its mouth is, comparatively, but a faint emblem of eternity. It has, indeed, all the sameness and formality of the avenue, to which it has succeeded, without any of its simple grandeur; for though in an avenue you see the same objects from beginning to end, and in the belt a new set every twenty yards, yet each successive part of this insipid circle is so like the preceding, that though really different the difference is scarcely felt, and there is nothing that so dulls, and at the same time so irritates the mind, as perpetual change without variety.

The avenue has a most striking effect from the very circumstance of its being strait; no other figure can give that image of a grand gothic aisle with its natural * columns and vaulted roof, whose general mass fills the eye, while the parti-

* Mr. Burke's *Sublime and Beautiful*, page 270.

cular parts insensibly steal from it in a long gradation * of perspective :

“ Small by degrees, and beautifully less.”

The broad solemn shade adds a twilight calm to the whole, and makes it, above all other places, most suited to meditation. To that also its straitness contributes ; for when the mind is disposed to turn inwardly on itself, any serpentine line would distract the attention. All the characteristic beauties of the avenue, its solemn stillness, the religious awe it inspires, are greatly heightened by moon light. This I once very strongly experienced in approaching a venerable castle-like mansion built in the beginning of the 15th century ; a few gleams had pierced the deep gloom of the avenue ; a large massive

* By *long* gradation I do not mean a great *length* of avenue ; I perfectly agree with Mr. Burke, “ that colonades and avenues of trees of a moderate length are without comparison far grander than when they are suffered to run to immense distances.”—Sublime and Beautiful, sect. x. p. 136.

tower at the end of it, seen through a long perspective, and half lit by the uncertain beams of the moon, had a grand mysterious effect. Suddenly a light appeared in this tower ; then as suddenly its twinkling vanished, and only the quiet silvery rays of the moon prevailed ; again, more lights quickly shifted to different parts of the building, and the whole scene most forcibly brought to my fancy the times of fairies and chivalry. I was much hurt to find from the master of the place that I might take my leave of the avenue and its romantic effects, for that a death warrant was signed.

The destruction of so many of these venerable approaches is a fatal consequence of the present excessive horror for strait lines ; sometimes, indeed, avenues do cut through the middle of very beautiful and varied ground, with which the stiffness of their form but ill accords, and where it were greatly to be wished they had never been

O 2 *not* planted.

planted *. They are, however, as often situated where a boundary of wood approaching to a strait line would be proper †, and in such places they furnish a walk of more perfect and continued shade than any other disposition of trees, without interfering with the rest of the place: when you turn from it either to the right

* Had they never been planted, other trees, in various positions and groups, would probably have sprung up in and near the place they occupy; but being there, it may often be doubtful whether they ought to be destroyed; for whenever such a line of trees is taken away, there must be a long vacant space that will separate the grounds, with their old original trees, on each side of it; and young trees planted in the vacancy will not in half a century connect the whole together. As to saving a few trees of the line itself for that purpose, I own I never saw it done that it did not produce a contrary effect, and that the spot was not haunted by the ghost of the departed avenue.

† At a gentleman's place in Cheshire, there is an avenue of oaks situated much in the manner I have described; Mr. Brown absolutely condemned it; but it now stands a noble monument of the triumph of the natural feelings of the owner over the narrow and systematic ideas of a professed improver.

or to the left, the whole country, with all its intricacies and varieties, is open before you ; but there is no escaping from the belt ; it hems you in on all sides, and if you please yourself with having discovered some wild sequestered part (if such there ever be when a belt-maker has been admitted) or some new pathway, and are in the pleasing uncertainty whereabouts you are, and whither it will lead you, the belt soon appears, and the charm of expectation is over. If you turn to the right or to the left, it keeps winding round you ; if you break through it, it catches you at your return ; and the idea of this distinct unavoidable line of separation damps all search after novelty: Far different from those magic circles of fairies and enchanters that gave birth to such potent and splendid illusions, to scenes of luxuriant imagination, the palaces and gardens of Alcina and Armida, this, like the ring of Angelica, instantly dissipates every illusion, every enchantment.

If ever a belt is allowable, it is where the house is situated in a dead flat, and in a naked ugly country; there at least it cannot injure any variety of ground or of distant prospect; it will also be the real boundary to the eye, however unvaried, and any exclusion in such cases is a benefit; but where there is variety of ground, and a descent from the house, it more completely disfigures the place than any other improvement. What most delights us in the intricacy of varied ground, of swelling knolls, and of vallies between them, retiring from the sight in different directions amidst trees or thickets, is, that it leads the eye (according to Hogarth's expression) a kind of wanton chace; this is what he properly calls the *beauty* of intricacy, and which distinguishes that which is produced by soft winding shapes, from that more sudden and quickly-varying kind which arises from broken and rugged forms. All this wanton chace, as well as the effects of more wild and picturesque intricacy,

eacy, is immediately checked and put an end to by any circular plantation ; which never appears to retire from the eye and lose itself in the distance, nor ever admits of partial concealments. Whatever varieties of hills and dales there may be, such a plantation must stiffly cut across them, and the undulations, and what in seamen's language may be called the *trending* of the ground, cannot in that case be humoured, or its playful character marked by that style of planting which at once points out and adds to its beautiful intricacy.

This may serve to shew how impossible it is to plan any forms of plantations that will suit all places *, however convenient
it

* In the art of medicine, after general principles are acquired, the judgment lies in the application ; and every case (as an eminent physician observed to me) must be considered as a special case.

This holds precisely in improving, and in both art the quacks are alike ; they have no principles, but only a few nostrums which they apply indiscriminately

it may be to the professor to establish such a doctrine.

I have perhaps expressed myself more strongly, and more at length than I otherwise should have done, on the subject of this paltry invention, from the extreme disgust I felt at seeing its effect in a place whose general features are among the noblest in the kingdom. In front, the sea embayed amidst islands, mountains, and promontories; a hanging descent of unequal ground from the house to the shore, on which descent different masses of wood, groupes, and single trees, more or less dispersed or connected together, with lawns and glades between them, gently leading

to all situations and all constitutions. Clumps and belts, pills and drops, are distributed with equal skill; the one plants the right, and clears the left, as the other bleeds the east and purges the west ward. The best improver or physician is he who leaves most to nature, who watches and takes advantage of those indications which she points out when left to exert her own powers, but which, when once destroyed or suppressed by an empiric of either kind, present themselves no more.

the

the eye among their intricacies to the shore, *might* have been planted, or left if growing there : this would have formed a rich and varied foreground to the magnificent distance ; and in the approach to the seaside, which ever way you took, would have broke that distance, and combined with it into a number of new and beautiful compositions. One of Mr. Brown's successors has thought differently, and this uncommon display of scenery is disgraced by a belt.

I do not remember this place in its unimproved state ; but I was told there was a great quantity of wood between the house and the sea, and that the vessels appeared (as at that wonderful place, Mount Edgecumbe) as if sailing over the tops, and gliding among the stems of the trees ; if so, this professor

“ Has left sad marks of his destructive sway.”

The method of thinning trees, which, under the idea of improvement, has been adopted by layers out of ground, perfectly
corresponds

corresponds with their method of planting, and as little attention is paid to what (in the general sense of the word) may be called picturesque effects. Trees of remarkable size, indeed, usually escape; but it is not sufficient to attend to the giants of the forest; often the loss of a few, nay of a single tree of middling size, is of more consequence to the general effect of the place, by making an irreparable breach in the outline of a principal wood; often some of the most beautiful groups owe the playful variety of their form, and their happy connection with other groups, to some apparently insignificant, and, to common observers, even ugly trees*. To attend to all these niceties of outline, connections, and grouping, would require much time as well as skill, and therefore a more easy and compendious method has been adopted: the different groups are

* Vide Sir Joshua Reynolds's Notes to Mason's *Du Fresnoy*, page 89.

to be cleared round till they become as clumplike as their untrained natures will allow, and even many of those outside trees that belong to the groups themselves (and to which they owe, not only their beauty, but their security against wind and frost) are cut down without pity if they will not range according to their model; till mangled, starved, and cut off from all connection, these unhappy newly drilled corps

“Stand bare and naked, trembling at themselves*.”

Even the old avenue, whose branches had intertwined with each other for ages, must undergo this fashionable metamorphosis, and that by way of breaking its

* Mr. Walpole mentions, that “where the plumage of an ancient wood extended wide its undulating canopy, and stood venerable in darkness—Kent thinned the foremost ranks.”

It is impossible to read Mr. Walpole’s description without feeling how much the character of such a wood must be destroyed by such a system of improvement.

regu-

regularity ; so far from having that effect, it is the only way to discover that regularity from every point : when entire, its straitness can only be seen when you look up or down it ; viewed sideways it has the appearance of a thick mass of wood ; if other trees are planted before it, to them it gives consequence, and they give it lightness and variety. But when it is clumpt, and you can see through it, and compare each of the separate clumps with the objects before and behind them, the strait line is apparent from whatever point you view it : In its close array the avenue is like the Grecian phalanx ; each tree, like each soldier, is firmly wedged in between its companions ; its branches, like their spears, present a front impenetrable to all attacks ; but the moment this compact order is broken, their sides become naked and exposed. Mr. Brown, like another Paulus Æmilius, has broken the firm embodied ranks of many a noble phalanx

lanx of trees *, and in this, perhaps, more than in any other instance, he has shewn how far the perversion of taste may be carried, when, at the same time that he deprived the avenue of its shade and its solemn grandeur, he encreased its formality.

* I do not know a more interesting account of a battle than Plutarch's description of that between Perseus and Paulus Æmilius, in which the famous Macedonian phalanx was at last, after repeated efforts, completely broken and vanquished. It is in his life of P. Æmilius, which, if any of my readers should not be acquainted with, and should be tempted to read from this allusion, I think they will feel highly obliged to me:

CHAPTER II.

IT is in the arrangement and management of trees that the great art of improvement consists: earth is too cumbrous and lumpish for man to contend much with, and its effects when worked upon are flat and dead like its nature. But trees, detaching themselves at once from the surface, and rising boldly into the air, have a more lively and immediate effect on the eye*. They alone form a canopy over us,

* I have generally observed, that persons not conversant in pictures and drawings, are in travelling much more attentive to distant objects than to near ones; and yet the variety and quick succession of pictures depends infinitely more on the latter. Distant objects do not rise so suddenly, or so immediately and powerfully strike upon the sight as near ones. Trees on the foreground, as you proceed, alter their position every

us, and a varied frame to all other objects, which they admit, exclude, and group with, almost at the will of the improver. In beauty, they not only far excel every thing of inanimate nature, but their beauty is compleat and perfect in itself, while that of almost every other object absolutely requires their assistance: without them, the most varied inequality of ground; rocks, and mountains *; even water itself in † all
its

every instant; distant woods remain the same for a long way. An extended prospect which, seen continually and uninterruptedly, had tired the eye, if afterwards viewed partially through trees, has the effect, and almost the reality, of novelty. Instead of one unchanging view of remote objects, each division of that view becomes a subordinate though a beautiful part of a new composition, of which the trees and the foreground are the principal.

* It is not meant that the mountains themselves must be wooded, but that there must be wood in the landscape; scenes of mere desolation, however grand, soon fatigue the mind.

† I have not mentioned the sea, as in this country at least, trees will not succeed near it, unless when it is land-locked, and then (though their combination, as at Mount

its characters of brooks, lakes, rivers, cataraacts, is cold, savage, and uninteresting: with them, even a dead flat may be full of variety and intricacy; and it is perhaps from their possessing these two last quali-

Mount Edgumbe, is no less beautiful than uncommon) the sea itself loses its grand imposing character, and puts on something of the appearance of a lake. *There* trees are necessary; for a *lake* bounded by naked rocks is a rude and dull landscape; but change the character of the one element only, let the *sea* break against those rocks, and trees will no longer be thought of. The sublimity of such a picture absorbs all idea of lesser ornaments; for no one can view the foam, the gulphs, the impetuous motion of that world of waters, without a deep impresson of its destructive and irresistible power. But sublimity is not its only character; for after that first awful sensation is weakened by use, the infinite variety, both in the forms of the waves, in their light and shadow, in the dashing of their spray, and, above all, the perpetual change of motion, continues to amuse the eye in detail, as much as the grandeur of the whole possessed the mind. It is in this that it differs not only from motionless objects, but even from rivers and cataraacts, however diversified in their parts. In them the spectator sees no change from what he saw at first; the same breaks in the current, the same falls continue, and possibly on that account they require the aid of trees; but the intricacies and varieties of waves breaking against rocks are as endless as their motion.

ties

ties in so eminent a degree, that trees are almost indispensibly necessary to picturesque and beautiful scenery.

The infinite *variety* of their forms, tints, and light and shade, must strike every body; the quality of *intricacy* they possess, if possible, in a still higher degree, and in a more exclusive and peculiar manner. Take a single tree only, and consider it in this point of view. It is composed of millions of boughs, sprays, and leaves, intermixed with and crossing each other in as many directions, while through the various openings the eye still discovers new and infinite combinations of them: yet, what is most surprising in this labyrinth of intricacy, there is no unpleasant confusion; the general effect is as simple as the detail is complicate, and a tree is perhaps the only object where a * grand whole (or

* Ground, rocks, and buildings, if the parts are much broken, become fantastic and trifling; besides, they have not that loose pliant texture so well adapted to partial concealment.

at least what is most conspicuous in it) is chiefly composed of innumerable minute and distinct parts.

To shew how much those who ought to be the best judges consider the qualities I have mentioned, no tree, however large and vigorous, however luxuriant the foliage, will be admired by the painter, if it present one uniform unbroken mass of leaves; while others, not only inferior in size and in thickness of foliage, but of forms that many improvers would see little merit in, and some cut down, will attract and fix their attention. The reasons of this preference are obvious; but as on these reasons, according to the ideas I have formed, the whole system of planting, pruning, and thinning for the purpose of beauty (in its more general acceptation) depends, I must be allowed to dwell a little longer on them.

A tree whose foliage is every where full and unbroken, of course can have but little variety of *form*; then as the sun strikes
only

only on the surface, neither can there be much variety of *light* and *shade*; and as the apparent colour of objects changes according to the different degrees of light or of shade in which they are placed, there can be as little * variety of *tint*; and lastly, as there are none of those openings that excite and nourish curiosity, but the eye is every where opposed by one uniform leafy screen, there is as little intricacy as variety. What is here said of a *single tree* is equally true of all *combinations* of them, and appears to me to account perfectly for the bad effect of clumps, and of all plantations and woods where the trees grow close together: Indeed, in all these cases the effect is in one respect much worse; we are disposed to admire the bulk of a single tree, the ipse nemus, though its form *should* be heavy; but there is a meanness as well as a heaviness in seeing a

* Lux varium vivumque dabit, nullum umbra colorem.

Du Fresnoy.

lumpy mass produced by a multitude of little stems.

What the qualities are that painters *do* admire in single trees, groups, and woods, may easily be concluded from what they do not; the detail would be infinite, for luckily where art does not interfere, the absolute exclusions are few. If *their* taste is to be preferred to that of improvers, there is clearly something radically bad in the usual method of making and managing plantations; it otherwise would never happen that the woods, and arrangements of trees which they are least disposed to admire, should be those made for the express purpose of ornament. Under that idea, the spontaneous trees of the country are often excluded as too common, or admitted in small proportions; and others of peculiar form and colour take place of oak and beech. But of whatever trees the *established* woods of the country are composed, the same, I think, should prevail in the *new* ones,

or

or those two grand principles, harmony and unity of character, will be destroyed. It is very common, however, when there happens to be a vacant space between two woods, to fill it up with firs, larches, &c.; if this be done with the idea of *connecting* those woods (and that *should* be the object) nothing can be more opposite than the effect: even plantations of the same species require time to make them accord with the old growths; but such harsh and sudden contrasts of form and colour make these insertions for ever appear like so many awkward pieces of patch-work *; and surely if a man was
reduced

* It is not enough that trees should be naturalized to the climate, they must also be naturalized to the landscape, and mixed and incorporated with the natives. A patch of foreign trees planted by themselves in the out-skirts of a wood, or in some open corner of it, mix with the natives much like a group of young Englishmen at an Italian *conversazione*: But when some plant of foreign growth appears to spring up by accident, and shoots out its beautiful, but less familiar foliage among our natural trees, it has the same pleasing effect as when a beautiful and amiable foreigner has

reduced to the necessity of having his coat pieced, he would wish to have the joinings concealed, and the colour matched, and not to be made a harlequin.

These dark shades and spire-like forms, that, when planted in patches, have such a motley appearance, may be so grouped with the prevailing trees of the country as to produce infinite richness and variety; and yet seem part of the original design; but I imagine it to be an established rule that plantations made for ornament, should, both in their form and in the trees they are composed of, be as distinct as possible from the woods of the country; so that no one may doubt an instant what are the parts that have been improved. Instead therefore of * that “rich, ample, and flowing robe

acquired our language and manners so as to converse with the freedom of a native, yet retains enough of original accent and character to give a peculiar grace and zest to all her words and actions.

* Mr. Maſon's Poem on Modern Gardening is ſo well known to all who have any taſte for the ſubject

robe that nature *should* wear on her throned eminence," she is curtailed of her fair proportions, and pinched and squeezed into shape; instead of "hill united to hill with sweeping train of forest, with prodigality of shade," the prim squat clump is perked up exactly on the top of every eminence. Sometimes, however, the extent is so great, that common sized clumps would make no figure, unless they were excessively multiplied; in that case it has been very ingeniously contrived to consolidate (and I am sure the word is not improperly used) a number of them into one great lump, and these condensed unwieldy masses are, without much choice, stuck about the grounds.

I have seen two places, on a very large scale, laid out in this manner by a pro-

or for poetry in general, that it is hardly necessary to say that the words between the inverted commas are chiefly taken from it. In the part from whence I have taken these two passages, he has pointed out the noblest style of planting in a style of poetry no less noble and elevated.

fessed improver of high reputation. The
 trees that principally shewed themselves
 were * larches, and from the multitude of
 their sharp points the whole country ap-
 peared en herisson, and had much the same
 degree of resemblance to natural scenery
 that one of the old military plans, with
 scattered platoons of spearmen, has to a
 print after Claude or Pouffin. With all
 my admiration of trees, I had rather be
 without them than have them so dispos-
 ed; indeed I have often seen hills, the
 outline of which,—the swellings,—and the
 deep hollows were so striking; and whose
 surface was so varied by the mixture of

* Wherever larches are mixed (though in small pro-
 portions) over the whole of a new plantation; from
 the quickness of their growth, their pointed tops, and
 the peculiarity of their colour, they are so conspicuous,
 that the whole wood seems to consist of nothing else.

The summits of all round headed trees (especially
 oak) vary in each tree; but there can be but one sum-
 mit to all pointed trees.

Linea recta velut sola est, & mille recurvæ.

Du Fresnoy.

smooth

smooth close-bitten turf with the rich though short cloathing of fern, of heath, or furze, and by the different openings and sheep tracks among them, that I should have been sorry to have had the whole covered with the finest wood; nay, could hardly have wished for trees the most happily disposed, and of course should have dreaded in proportion those which are usually placed there by art. An improver has rarely such dread; in general the first idea that strikes him is that of distinguishing his property, nor is he easy till he has put his pitch-mark on all the summits*. Indeed this often gratifies

* Vanity is a general enemy to all improvement, and there is no such enemy to the real improvement of the beauty of grounds as the foolish vanity of making a parade of their extent, and of various marks of the owner's property, under the title of "Appropriation." Where there *are* any noble features that are debased by meaner objects—where greater extent would shew a rich and varied boundary, and that boundary proportioned to that extent—whatever choaks up or degrades such scenes should of course be removed; but where there

tifies his desire of celebrity; it excites the curiosity and admiration of the vulgar; and travellers of taste will naturally be provoked to enquire from another motive, to whom those unfortunate hills belong.

It is melancholy to compare the slow progress of beauty with the upstart growth of deformity; trees and woods planted in the noblest style will not for years strongly attract the painter's notice, though, luckily for their preservation, the planter is like a

there are no such features—no such boundaries—to appropriate by destroying many a pleasant meadow, and by shewing you, when they are laid into one great common, green enough to surfeit a man in a calenture—to appropriate by clumping their naked hedgerows, and planting other clumps and patches of exotics that seem to stare about them, and wonder how they came there—to appropriate by demolishing many a cheerful retired cottage that interfered with nothing but the despotic love of exclusion; and make amends, perhaps, by building a village regularly picturesque—is to appropriate by disgusting all whose taste is not insensible or depraved, in the same sense that an alderman appropriates a plate of turtle by sneezing over it.

fond

fond * mother who feels the greatest tenderness for her children at the time they are least interesting to others.

But to the deformer (a name too often synonymous to the improver) it is not necessary that his trees should have attained their full growth ; as soon as he has made his round fences, and planted them, his principal work is done ; the eye which used to follow with delight the bold sweep of outline, and all the playful undulation of ground, finds itself suddenly checked, and its progress stopt even by these embryo clumps. They have the same effect on the great features of nature as an excrescence has on those of the human face ; in which, though the proportion of one feature to another greatly varies in different persons, yet these differences, like similar ones in inanimate nature, give va-

* Madame de Sevigné, whose maternal tenderness seems to have extended itself to her plantations, says, " Je fais abbatre de grands arbres parce qu'ils nuisent a mes jeunes enfans."

riety of character, and all the parts accord together ; but let there be a wart or a pimple on any prominent feature,—no dignity or beauty of countenance can detach the attention from it ; that little, round, distinct lump, while it disgusts the eye, has a fascinating power of fixing it on its own deformity. This is precisely the effect of clumps ; the beauty or grandeur of the surrounding parts only serves to make them more horribly conspicuous, and the dark tint of the Scotch fir (of which they are generally composed) as it separates them by colour as well as by form from every other object, adds the last finish.

But even large plantations of firs, when they are not the natural trees of the country, and when, as it usually happens, they are left too thick, have, in my mind, a harsh look, and on the same principle of their not harmonizing with the rest of the landscape. A planter very naturally wishes to produce some appearance of wood as soon as possible ; he therefore sets his trees
 very

very close together, and ever afterwards his paternal fondness will scarce suffer him to cut any of them down. They are consequently all drawn up together, nearly to the same height; and as their heads touch each other, no variety, no distinction of form can exist, but the whole is one enormous, unbroken, unvaried mass of black. Its appearance is so uniformly dead and heavy, that instead of those cheering ideas that arise from the fresh and luxuriant * foliage, and the lighter tints of deciduous trees, it has something of that dreary image—that extinction of form and colour which Milton felt from blindness; when he, who had viewed objects with a painter's

* Perhaps, in strict propriety, the term of foliage should never be applied to firs, as they have no leaves, and, I believe, it is partly to that circumstance that they owe their want of cheerfulness. Those among the lower evergreens that have leaves, such as holly, laurel, arbutus, are much more chearful than the juniper, cypress, arbor vitæ, &c. The leaves (if one may so call them) of the yew, have much the same character as some of the firs.

eye,

eye, as he described them with a poet's fire,
was

Presented with an universal blank
Of nature's works.

It must be considered also, that the eye feels an impression from objects analogous to that of weight, as appears from the expression, a *heavy* colour, a *heavy* form; hence arises the necessity in landscape of preserving a proper balance of both, and this is a very principal part of the art of painting. If in a picture the one half was to be light and airy both in the forms and in the tints, and the other half one black heavy lump, the most ignorant person would probably be displeased (though he might not know upon what principle) with the want of *balance* and of harmony; for these harsh discordant effects not only act more forcibly from being brought together within a small compass, but also because in painting they are not authorized by fashion, or rendered familiar by custom.

The inside of these plantations fully
answers

answers to the dreary appearance of the
 * outside : Of all dismal scenes it seems to
 me the most likely for a man to hang him-
 self in ; he would, however, find some
 difficulty in the execution, for amidst the
 endless multitude of stems there is rarely
 a single side branch to which a rope could
 be fastened. The whole wood is a col-
 lection of tall naked poles, with a few
 ragged boughs near the top ; above,—one
 uniform rusty cope, seen through decayed
 and decaying sprays and branches ; below,—

* I have known persons who acknowledged that the
inside of a close wood (either evergreen or deciduous)
 was poor and shabby, yet thought that at some distance
 its *outside* looked as well as that of a more open one.
 The defects of all objects are of course diminished as
 they are more removed from the eye, but as far as
 form can be distinguished (and that includes a large
 circuit) the difference is very perceptible between a
 wood where the trees have been cramped by each other,
 and one where their heads have had full room to extend
 themselves. If two such woods, even at the extremity
 of an extensive view, are lit up by a gleam of sunshine,
 the depth of shadow, and the fulness and richness of the
 one, will clearly distinguish it from the uniform heaviness
 of the other.

the

the soil parched and blasted with the baleful droppings; hardly a plant or a blade of grass; nothing that can give an idea of life or vegetation: even its gloom is without solemnity; it is only dull and dismal; and what light there is, like that of hell,

“ Serves only to discover scenes of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades.”

In a grove where the trees have had room to spread (and in that case I by no means exclude the * Scotch fir or any of the pines) there is a solemn grandeur in the shade, both from the broad and varied canopy over head, the small number and large size of the trunks by which that canopy is supported †, and from the large

* Mr. Gilpin has admirably pointed out the picturesque character of the Scotch fir (where it has had room to spread) in his remarks on forest scenery; and he as justly condemns the usual method of planting and leaving them in close array.

† This circumstance seems to have struck Virgil in the case of a single tree:

Media ipsa ingentem sustinet umbram.

undisturbed

undisturbed spaces between them : but a close wood of firs is, perhaps, the only one from which the opposite qualities of cheerfulness and grandeur, of symmetry and variety are equally excluded ; and in which, though the sight is perplexed and harrassed by the confusion of petty objects, there is not the smallest degree of intricacy.

Firs, planted and left in the same close array, are very commonly made use of as screens and boundaries in places where concealment is necessary: as the lower part of such screens is in general of most consequence, they are, for the reasons I mentioned before, the most improper trees for that purpose: but supposing them exactly in the condition the planter would wish; that the outer boughs (on which alone they depend) were preserved from animals; and, though planted along the brow of a hill, they had escaped from wind and snow, and the many accidents to which they are exposed in bleak situations;

tions; they would then exactly answer to that admirable description of Mr. Mason:

“ The Scottish fir
In murky file rears his inglorious head
And blots the fair horizon.”

Nothing can be more accurately or more forcibly expressed, or raise a juster image in the mind. Every thick unbroken mass of black (especially when it can be compared with softer tints) is a blot; and has the same effect on the horizon in nature, as if a dab of ink were thrown upon that of a Claude. This, however, is viewing it in its most favourable state, when at least it answers the purpose of a screen, though a heavy one; but it happens full as often that the outer boughs do not reach above half way down; and then, besides the long, black, even line that cuts the horizon at the top, there is at bottom a streak of glaring light that pierces every where through the meagre and naked poles (still more wretchedly meagre when opposed to such

such a back ground) and shews distinctly the poverty and thinness of the boundary. Many a common hedge that has been suffered to grow wild, with a few trees in it, is a much more varied and effectual screen; but there *are* hedges, where yews and hollies are mixed with trees and thorns,—so thick from the ground upwards,—so diversified in their outline,—in the tints, and in the light and shade,—that the eye, which dwells on them with pleasure, is perfectly deceived; and can neither see through them, nor discover (hardly even suspect) their want of depth.

This striking contrast between a mere hedge and trees planted for the express purpose of concealment and beauty, affords a very useful hint, not only for screens and boundaries, but for every sort of ornamental plantation. It seems to point out that concealment cannot so well be produced without a mixture of the smaller growths, such as thorns and hollies,

Q 2

which,

which, being naturally bushy, fill up the lower parts where the larger trees are apt to be bare; that such a mixture must produce great variety of outline, as these smaller growths will not hinder the larger from extending their heads; at the same time by reason of their different heights, more or less approaching to those of the timber trees, they accompany and group with them, and prevent that set formal appearance which trees generally have when there are large spaces between them, even though they should not be planted at regular distances.

It seems to me, that if this method was followed in all ornamental plantations, it would in a great measure obviate the bad effects of their being left too close, either from foolish fondness or neglect. Suppose, for instance, that instead of the usual method of making an evergreen plantation of firs only, and those stuck close together, the firs were planted eight,

†

twelve,

twelve, or more yards asunder (of course varying the distances) and that the spaces between them were filled with the lower evergreens *. All these would for some years grow up together, till at length the firs would shoot above them all, and find nothing afterwards to check their growth in any direction. Suppose such a wood, upon the largest scale, to be left to itself, and not a bough cut for twenty, thirty, any number of years, and that then it came into the hands of a person

* I believe there are only three sorts natural to this country, holly, box, and juniper; to which, on account of the slowness of its growth, and its doing so well under the drip of other trees, may be added the yew. There is, however, a great variety of exotics that are perfectly hardy, and many others that will succeed in sheltered spots, and the most scrupulous person will allow, that among firs (the greatest part of which are exotics) they are perfectly in character.—Whoever has been at Mount Edgcumbe, and remembers the mixture of the arbutus, &c. with the spreading pines, will want no farther recommendation of this method: I must own, that amidst all the grand features of that noble place, it made no slight impression on me.

who wished to give variety to this rich but uniform mass. He might in some parts like an * open grove of firs only; in that case he would only have to clear away all the lower evergreens, and the firs which remained, from their free unconstrained manner of growing, would appear as if they had been planted with that design. In other parts he might make that beautiful forest-like mixture of open grove with thickets and loosely scattered trees; of lawns and glades of various shapes and dimensions, variously bounded. Sometimes he might find the ground scooped out into a deep hollow, forming a sort of amphitheatre; and there, in order to shew its general shape, and yet pre-

* A grove of large spreading pines is very solemn, but that solemnity might occasionally be varied, and in some respects heightened, by a mixture of yews and cypresses, which at the same time would give an idea of extreme retirement and of sepulchral melancholy. In other parts a very pleasing contrast in winter might be formed by hollies, arbutus, laurustinus, and others that bear berries and flowers at that season,

serve

serve its sequestered character, he might only make a partial clearing; when all that can give intricacy, variety, and retirement to a spot of this kind would be ready to his hands.

It may indeed be objected, (and not without reason) that this evergreen underwood will have grown so close, that, when thinned, the plants which are left will look bare; and bare they will look, for such must necessarily be the effect of leaving any trees too close. There are, however, several reasons why it is of less consequence in this case. The first and most material is, that the great outline of the wood, formed by the highest trees, would not be affected; another is, that these lower trees being of various growths, some will have outstripped their fellows in the same proportion as the firs outstripped them, and consequently their heads will have had room to spread, and form a gradation from the highest firs to the lowest underwood.

Q 4 Again,

Again, many of these evergreens of lower growth succeed well under the drip of taller trees, and also (to use the figurative expression of nursery-men) love the knife: by pruning some, therefore, and cutting down others, the bare parts of the taller ones would in a short time be covered; and the whole of such a wood might be divided at pleasure into openings and groups, differing in form, in size, and in degrees of concealment, from skirtings of the loosest texture, to the closest and most impenetrable thickets *,

There

* This method is equally good in making plantations of deciduous trees, though not in the same degree necessary as in those of firs; and though I have only mentioned *ornamental* plantations, yet, I believe, if thorns were always mixed with oak, beech, &c, besides their use in preventing the forest trees from being planted too close to each other, they would by no means be unprofitable. If they were taken out before they were too large to be moved easily, their use for hedges, and their ready sale for that purpose, is well known; if left longer they are particularly useful in planting in gaps, where smaller ones would be stifled; and if they remained, they would always make excellent

There are few operations in improvement more pleasant than that of opening gradually a scene where the materials are only too abundant, but not absolutely spoiled; as they are in a thick wood of firs. In that, there is no room for selection,—no exercise of the judgment in arranging the groups, masses, or single trees,—no power of renewing vegetation by pruning or cutting down,—or of producing by that, and hardly by any other means, the smallest intricacy or variety. If one bare pole is removed, that behind differs from it so little that one might exclaim with Macbeth,

lent hedge wood, and answer all the common purposes of underwood. For ornament, a great variety of lower growths might be added; and, among the rest, of thorns of different species, the maple leaved, &c. &c.

It is not meant that the largest growths should *never* be planted near each other; some of the most beautiful groups are often formed by such a close junction, but not when they have all been planted at the same time, and drawn up together. A judicious improver will know when and how to deviate from any method, however generally good.

“ Thy

"Thy air

"Is like the first—a third is like the former—

"Horrible fight!"—

and so they would unvariedly go on,

"tho' their line

"Stretch'd out to the crack of doom."

In describing these two woods, I do not think I have at all exaggerated the ugliness and the incorrigible sameness of the one, and the variety and beauty of which the other is capable. I mean however *that* variety which arises from the *manner* in which these evergreens may be disposed, not from the number of distinct species. I have indeed often observed in forests, (those great storehouses of picturesque dispositions of trees) that merely from oak, beech, thorns, and hollies arose so many combinations, so different in effect from what is gained by ever so great a diversity of trees lumped together, that one hardly wished for more variety; it put me in mind of what is mentioned of the
more

more ancient Greek painters; that with only four colours, they did what in the more degenerate days of the art could not be performed with all the aid of chemistry.

The true end of variety is to relieve the eye, not to perplex it; it does not consist in the diversity of separate objects, but in the diversity of their effects when combined together, in diversity of composition, and of character; many think, however, they have obtained that grand object when they have exhibited in one body all the hard names of the Linnæan system*; but when as great a diversity of

* In a botanical light such a collection is extremely curious and entertaining, but it is about as good a specimen of variety in landscape as a line of Lilly's grammar would be of variety in poetry:

Et postis, vectis, vermis societur et axis.

A collection of hardy exotics may also be considered as a very valuable part of the improver's palet, and suggest many new and harmonious combinations of colours; but then he must not call the palet a picture.

§

plants

plants as can well be got together is exhibited in *every* shrubbery, or in every plantation, the result is a sameness of a different kind, but not less truly a sameness than would arise from there being no diversity at all; for there is no having variety of character without a certain distinctness, without certain marked features on which the eye can dwell.

In forests and woody commons we sometimes come from a part where hollies had chiefly prevailed, to another where junipers or yews are the principal evergreens; and where perhaps there is the same sort of change in the deciduous trees and underwood: this strikes us with a new impression; but mix them equally together in all parts, and diversity becomes a source of monotony.

Two of the principal defects in the composition of landscapes are the opposite extremes of objects being too crowded or too scattered; the clump is a happy
union

union of these two grand defects; it is scattered with respect to the general composition, and close and lumpish when considered by itself.

One great cause of the superior variety and richness of unimproved parks and forests, when compared with lawns and dressed ground, and of their being so much more admired by painters, is,—that the trees and groups are seldom totally alone * and unconnected; of this, and of all that is most attractive in natural scenery, the two great sources are accident and neglect †.

In

* In the *Liber Veritatis*, consisting of above three hundred drawings by Claude, I believe there are not more than three single trees. This is one strong proof (and I imagine the works of other painters would fully confirm it) that those who most studied the effect of visible objects attended infinitely more to connection than to separate forms. The practice of improvers is directly the reverse.

† I remember hearing what I thought a very just criticism on a part of Mr. Crab's poem of the Library. He has there personified *Neglect*, and given her the
active

In *forests* and in *old parks* the rough bushes nurse up young trees, and grow up with them; and thence arises that infinite variety of openings, of inlets, of glades, of forms of trees, &c. the effect of all which might be preserved and rendered more *beautiful*, by a judicious style and degree of clearing and polishing, and might be successfully imitated in other parts.

Lawns are very commonly made by laying together a number of fields and meadows, the insides of which are generally cleared of bushes: when those hedges are taken away, it must be a great piece of luck if the trees that were in them, and those which were scattered about the

active employment of spreading dust on books of ancient chivalry. But in producing picturesque effects, I begin to think her vis inertiae is in many cases a very powerful agent.

Should this criticism induce any person who had not read the *Library* to look at that part I have mentioned, he will soon forget his motive for looking at it in his admiration of one of the most animated and highly poetical descriptions I ever read.

open

open parts, should so combine together as to form a connected whole. The case is much more desperate when a layer out of grounds has persuaded the owner,

To improve an old family seat,
By *lawning* a hundred good acres of *wheat*;

for the insides of *arable* grounds have seldom any trees in them, and the hedges but few; and then clumps and belts are the only resources.

Such an improvement, however, is greatly admired; and I have frequently heard it wondered at, that a green lawn, which is so charming in nature, should look so ill when painted. It must be owned that it does look miserably flat and insipid in a picture; but that is not *entirely* the fault of the painter*; for it is hardly possible
to

* It is, I believe, out of the power of the art to make a long extent of smooth unbroken green interesting; but it must also be allowed that it might be made less bad than the representations of lawns I have happened to see. Mr. Gilpin observes, that "were a lake spread
"out on the canvass in one simple hue, it would be a
"dull

to invent any thing more insipid than one uniform green surface dotted with clumps and surrounded by a belt. If you will suppose a lawn with trees of every growth dispersed in the happiest manner, and with as much intricacy and variety as mere grass and trees can give to a lawn without destroying its character,—such a scene, painted by a Claude, would be a soft pleasing picture; but it would want precisely what it wants in nature,—that happy union of warm and cool, of smooth and rough, of picturesque and beautiful, which makes the charm of his best compositions. Were two such pictures (both equally well painted) hung up by each other, the defects of the smooth green landscape would be felt immediately; and

“dull fatiguing object”; he might have added, a very unnatural one: it would then bear the same sort of resemblance to a lake, as some portraits of gentlemen’s seats do to a lawn, which, though in general a sufficiently dull and fatiguing object, yet has tints, and lights and shadows but ill represented by one simple hue of green spread upon the canvas.

were

were it possible to bring two such scenes in nature into as immediate a comparison, he must be a sturdy improver who would hesitate between the two.

But though such scenes as the great masters made choice of are much more varied and animated than one of mere grass can be, yet I am very far from wishing the peculiar character of lawns to be destroyed. The study of the principles of painting would be very ill applied by an improver, who should endeavour to give to each scene every variety that might please in a picture separately considered, instead of such varieties as are consistent with the connections and dependencies it has on other objects, and its peculiar character and situation. Smoothness and verdure are the two most characteristic beauties of a lawn, but they are in their nature closely allied to monotony; improvers, instead of endeavouring to remedy that defect, which is inherent in those essential qualities of beauty, have on

R the

the contrary added to it and made it much more striking, by the disposition of their trees, and their method of forming the banks of artificial rivers: nor have they confined this system of levelling and turfing to those scenes where smoothness and verdure ought to be the ground-work of improvement, but have made it the fundamental principle of their art *.

* A perfectly flat square meadow surrounded by a neat hedge, and neither tree nor bush in it, is looked upon not only without disgust, but with pleasure; for it pretends only to neatness and utility: the same may be said of a piece of arable of excellent husbandry. But when a dozen pieces are laid together, and called a lawn or a pleasure-ground, with manifest pretensions to beauty, the eye grows fastidious, and has not the same indulgence for taste as for agriculture. Men of property, who either from false taste, or from a sordid desire of gain, disfigure such scenes or buildings as painters admire, provoke our indignation: not so when agriculture, in its general progress, (as is often unfortunately the case) interferes with picturesqueness or beauty: the painter may indeed lament, but that science, which of all others most benefits mankind, has a right to more than his forgiveness; when wild thickets are converted into scenes of plenty and industry, and when gypsies and vagrants give way to the less picturesque figures of husbandmen and their attendants.

I believe

I believe the idea that smoothness and verdure will make amends for the want of variety and picturesqueness, arises from not distinguishing those qualities that are grateful to the mere organ of sight, from those various combinations, which, through the progressive cultivation of that sense, have produced inexhaustible sources of delight and admiration. Mr. Mason observes, that green is to the eye what harmony is to the ear; the comparison holds throughout, for a long continuance of either, without some relief, is equally tiresome to either sense. Soft and smooth sounds are those which are most grateful to the mere sense; the least artful combination (even that of a third below sung by another voice) at first distracts the attention from the tune; when that is got over, a Venetian duet appears the perfection of melody and harmony. By degrees the ear, like the eye, tires of a repetition of the same flowing strain, and requires some marks of invention, of ori-

ginal and striking character, as well as of sweetness, in the melodies of a composer; it takes in more and more intricate combinations of harmony and opposition of parts, not only without confusion but with delight; and with that delight (the only lasting one) which is produced both from the effect of the whole, and the detail of the parts *: At the same time the having acquired a relish for such artful combinations, so far from excluding (except in narrow pedantic minds) a taste for simple melodies, or simple scenes, height-

* This I take to be the reason why those who are real connoisseurs in any art can give the most unwearied attention to what the general lover is soon tired of. Both are struck (though not in the same manner or degree) with the *whole* of a scene; but the painter is also eagerly employed in examining the *parts*, and all the artifice of nature in composing such a whole. The general lover stops at the first gaze, and I have heard it said by those who in other pursuits shewed the most discriminating taste; "Why should we look at these things any more — we have seen them."

Non piu parlar di lor', ma guarda & passa.

ens

ens the enjoyment of them. It is only by such acquirements that a man learns to distinguish what is simple, from what is bald and common-place; what is varied and intricate, from what is only perplexed.

CHAPTER III.

OF all the effects in landscape, the most brilliant and captivating are those produced by water, on the management of which I have heard Mr. Brown particularly piqued himself. If those beauties in natural rivers and lakes that are imitable by art, and the selections of them in the works of great painters, are the best guides in forming artificial ones, Mr. Brown grossly mistook his talent; for among all his tame productions, his pieces of made water are perhaps the most so.

One of the most striking properties of water, and which most distinguishes it from the grosser element of earth, is its being a mirror, and a mirror that gives a peculiar freshness and tenderness to the colours

colours it reflects; it softens the stronger lights, though the lucid veil it throws over them seems hardly to diminish their brilliancy; it adds depth to the shadows, while its glassy surface preserves and seems even to encrease their transparency. These beautiful and varied effects however, are chiefly produced by the *near* objects; by trees and bushes immediately on the banks; by those that hang over the water, and form dark coves beneath their branches; by various tints of the soil where the ground is broken; by roots and old trunks of trees, tufticks of rushes, large stones that are partly whitened by the air and partly covered with mosses, lichens, and weather-stains; while the soft tufts of grass, and the smooth verdure of meadows with which they are intermixed, appear a thousand times more soft, smooth, and verdant by such contrasts *.

But

* If a man really wishes to form a just and unbiassed opinion of the merits of a beautiful river, and of an ar-

But to produce reflections there must be objects; for according to a maxim I have heard quoted from the old law of France (a maxim that hardly required the sanction of such venerable authority) *ou il n'y a rien le roi perd ses droits*; and this is generally a case in point with respect to Mr. Brown's artificial rivers *.

tificial one as they have hitherto been made; let him observe the circumstances I have just mentioned at different times of the day, and in different degrees of light and of shadow; and then, while all this is fresh in his recollection, let him as attentively examine an artificial river; and judge how far mere greenness and smoothness make amends for the total absence of every thing else.

* I consider Mr. Brown as the Hercules to whom the labours of the lesser ones are to be attributed: When I speak of his artificial water, I mean to include all that has been done by his followers after his model; and there can be no difficulty in copying that model exactly. Natural rivers, indeed, can only be imitated by the eye either in painting or reality; but his may be surveyed, and an exact plan taken of them by admeasurement; and though a representation of them would not accord with a Claude or a Gasper, it might with great propriety be hung up with a map of the demesne lands.

Even when, according to Mr. Walpole's * description, " a few trees, scattered here and there on its edges, sprinkle the tame bank that accompanies its mæanders," the reflections would not have any great variety or brilliancy.

The mæanders of a river, which at every turn present scenes of a different character, make us strongly feel the use and the charm of them; but when the same sweeps return as regularly as the steps of a minuet, the eye is quite wearied with following them over and over again.

* The passage I have quoted is in his treatise on Modern Gardening: the general tenor of that part is in commendation of the present style of made-water; but this passage contains more just and pointed satire than ever was conveyed in the same number of words: *a few trees, scattered here and there on its edges, sprinkle the tame bank*. It seems to me that in the midst of praises, his natural taste breaks out into perhaps unintended criticisms, and which on that account may well sting the improver who reads them; for the sting is always much sharper when

Medio de fonte leporum

Surgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angat.

What

What makes the sweeps much more formal is their extreme nakedness; the sprinkling a few scattered trees on their edges will not do; there must be masses and groups, and various degrees of openings and concealment; and by such means some little variety may be given even to these tame banks, for tame they always will remain; and it may be here observed, that the same objects which produce reflections also produce variety of outline, of tints, of lights and shadows, as well as intricacy; so intimate is the connection between all these different beauties, so often does the absence of one of them imply the absence of the others.

In the turns of a beautiful river, the lines are so varied with projections, coves, and inlets; with smooth and broken ground; with open parts, and with others fringed and overhung with trees and bushes; with peeping rocks and large mossy stones, and all their soft and brilliant reflections, that the eye lingers upon them; the two banks
seem

seem as it were to protract their meeting, and the junction of them is formed insensibly, they so blend and unite with each other. In Mr. Brown's naked canals nothing detains the eye a moment, and the two bare sharp extremities appear to cut into each other *. If a near approach to mathematical exactness was a merit instead of defect, the sweeps of Mr. Brown's water would be admirable; for they seem not to have been formed by degrees with spades, but scooped out at once by an immense iron crescent, which, after cutting

* "When we look at a naked wall, from the evenness of the object the eye runs along its whole space, and arrives quickly at its termination." Mr. Burke's *Sublime and Beautiful*, p. 27.—This accounts for the total want of picturesqueness, and of all interest whatsoever, in a continuation of naked edgy lines; for where there is nothing to detain the eye, there is nothing to amuse it. I may add, that wherever ground is cut with a sharp instrument, it has that ideal effect on the eye; it is a metaphor which naturally prevails in many languages where lines (from whatever cause) are hard and edgy. When A. Caracci speaks of the edginess of Raphael compared with Correggio, he uses the expression *così duro & tagliente—couleurs tranchantes, &c.*

out

out the indented part on one side, was applied to the opposite side, and then reversed to make the sweeps; so that in each sweep, the indented and projecting parts, if they could be shoved together, would fit like the pieces of a dissected map.

Where these pieces of water are made, if there happen to be any sudden breaks or inequalities in the ground; any thickets or bushes; any thing, in short, that might cover the rawness and formality of new work; instead of taking advantage of such accidents, all must be made level and bare; and by a strange perversion of terms, the stripping nature stark-naked is called dressing her.

A piece of still water, with such a thin grassy edge, looks like a temporary overflowing; to give to the whole a character of age, of permanency, and capacity, it requires some height, and some degree of abruptness in part of the banks—some appearance of their having been gradually worn and undermined by the action of the water,

As

As the banks are generally formed, a stranger might often suppose that when dry weather came the *flood* would go off, and the *meadow* be restored to its natural state.

And yet, however fond of art, and even of the appearance of it, some improvers seem to be, I fancy, if a stranger was to mistake one of their dabs of made water for the Thames, such an error would not only be forgiven, but considered as the highest compliment ; notwithstanding Mr. Brown's modest *apostrophe to that river.

But though an imitation of the most striking varieties of nature, so skilfully arranged as to pass for nature herself, would be acknowledged as the highest attainment of art ; yet it seems never to have occurred to any one to copy those circumstances which might occasion so flattering a de-

* "Thames ! Thames ! Thou wilt never forgive me."—A well known exclamation of Mr. Brown, when he was looking with rapture and exultation at one of his own canals.

ception.

ception. If it was proposed to any of these professors to make an artificial river without regular curves*, slopes, and levelled banks, but with those characteristic beauties and negligencies which give a certain air of naturalness as well as variety to *real* rivers, and which distinguish them from what is universally done by art, they would, in Briggs's language, "stare like stuck pigs—do no such thing;" their talent lies another way; and if you have a *real* river, and will let them improve it, you will be surprised to find how soon they will make it like an *artificial* one; so much so, that the most critical eye could scarcely discover that it had not

* The lines in natural rivers, in bye roads, in the skirtings of glades of forests, have sometimes the appearance of regular curves, and seem to justify the use of them in artificial scenery; but something always saves them from such a crude degree of it. If, on a subject so very unmathematical, one might venture to use any allusion to that science, or any term drawn from it, such lines might be called picturesque asymptotes; however they may approach to regular curves, they never fall into them.

+

been

been planned by Mr. Brown, and formed by the spade and the wheelbarrow.

All these defects in the banks of made water, may, I am persuaded, be got over by judicious management *; but there is another consideration on this subject that

* Mr. Repton, (who is deservedly at the head of his profession) might effectually correct the errors of his predecessors, if to his taste and facility in drawing (an advantage they did not possess) to his quickness of observation, and to his experience in the practical part, he was to add an attentive study of what the higher artists have done, both in their pictures and drawings: Their selections and arrangements would point out many beautiful compositions and effects in nature, which without such a study may escape the most experienced observer.

The fatal rock on which all professed improvers are likely to split, is that of system; they become mannerists both from getting fond of what they have done before, and from the ease of repeating what they have so often practised; but to be reckoned a mannerist is at least as great a reproach to the improver as to the painter. I have never seen any piece of water that Mr. Repton had both planned and finished himself: Mr. Brown seems to have been perfectly satisfied when he had made a natural river look like an artificial one; I hope Mr. Repton will have a nobler ambition—that of having his artificial rivers and lakes mistaken for natural ones.

deserves

deserves to be weighed by every improver. To make an artificial river, you must necessarily begin by destroying one of the greatest charms of a natural one; and motion is such a charm, so suited to all tastes, that before a running brook is forced into stagnant water, the advantages of such an alteration ought to be very apparent: if it is determined, nothing that may compensate for such a loss should be neglected; and as the water itself can have but one uniform surface, every variety of which banks are capable should be studied both from nature and painting, and those selected which will best accord with the general scenery. Objects of reflection seem peculiarly suited to still water, for, besides their distinct beauty, they soften the cold white glare of what is usually called a fine sheet of water. This expression, as I before observed (and I believe it is the case with other common forms of compliment) contains a very just criticism on what it seems to commend,

and

and the origin of such mixtures of praise and censure may, I think, be easily accounted for. The person who first makes use of such a form, and brings it into vogue, only expresses a sudden idea that strikes him, without examining it accurately. Any person, for instance, who was shewn, for the first time, a piece of made water, would probably be struck with the white glare of the water itself, and with the uniform greenness and exact level of its banks, or rather its border; the idea of linen spread upon grass might thence very naturally occur to him, which, in civil language, he would express by a fine sheet of water, and this is always meant and taken as a flattering expression, though nothing can more pointedly describe the defects of such a scene *: had there been any variety in the banks;

* I happened to be at a gentleman's house, the architect of which (to use Colin Campbell's expression) "had not preserved the majesty of the front from the ill effect of crowded apertures." A neighbour of his, meaning to pay him a compliment on the number and

S

closeness

banks, with deep shades, brilliant lights, and reflections, the idea of a sheet would hardly have suggested itself, or if it had, he who made such a comparison would have made a very bad one ;

“ And liken’d things that are not like at all.”

But in the other case, nothing can be more like than a sheet of water and a real sheet; and wherever there is a large blanching ground, the most exact imitations of Mr. Brown’s lakes and rivers might be made in linen ; and they would be just as proper objects of jealousy to the Thames as any of his performances.

I am aware that Mr. Brown’s admirers, with one voice, will quote the great water at Blenheim as a complete answer to all I have said against him on this subject. No one can admire more highly than I do

closeness of his windows, exclaimed, “ What a charming house you have ! upon my word it is quite like a lantern.” I must own I think the two compliments equally flattering ; but a charming lantern has not yet had the success of a fine sheet.

that

that most princely of all places ; but it would be doing great injustice to nature and Vanbrugh not to distinguish their merits in forming it from those of Mr. Brown.

If there is an improvement more obvious than all others, it is that of damming up a stream which flows on an easy level through a valley *, and it required no effort of genius to place the head in the narrowest and most concealed part ; this is all that Mr. Brown has done. He has, indeed, the negative merit (and that no small one, and to which he is not always entitled) of having left the opposite bank of wood in its natural state † ; and had he profited

* I will not go quite so far as a friend of mine (well known for his love of maintaining singular opinions) who, when we were talking, upon the spot, of the great water, and of Mr. Brown's merit in conceiving it, declared he was quite certain there was not a house-maid in Blenheim to whom it would not immediately have occurred.

† I am convinced, however, that a Mr. Brown, though he may not often venture on so flagrant a piece

profited by so excellent a model—had he formed and planted the other more distant banks, so as to have continued something of the same style and character round the lake, (though with those diversities which would naturally have occurred to a man of the least invention) he would, in my opinion, have had some claim to a title created since his time; a title of no small pretension, that of landscape gardener: but if those banks above and near the bridge were formed, or

of mischief as clumping and shaving such a bank of wood as that at Blenheim, yet seldom, if ever, feels and distinguishes the peculiar beauties of its *unimproved* state. A professed improver is in all respects like a professed picture-cleaner; the one is always occupied with grounds and the other with pictures; but the eyes and taste of both are so vitiated by their practice, that they see nothing in either but subjects for smoothing and polishing; and they work on till they have skinned and flead every thing they meddle with. Those characteristic and spirited roughnesses, together with that patina, the varnish of time, and which time only can give (and which in pictures may sometimes hide crudities which escape even the last glazing of the painter) immediately disappear; and pictures and places are scoured as bright as Scriblerus's shield, and with as little remorse on the part of the scourers.

even

even approved of by him, his taste had more of the engineer than the painter; for they have so strong a resemblance to the glacis of a fortification, that it might well be supposed that shape had been given them in compliment to the first duke of Marlborough's campaigns in Flanders.

The bank near the house, opposite to the wooded one, and which forms part of the pleasure ground, is extremely well done; for that required a high degree of polish, and there the gardener was at home. Without meaning to detract from his real merit in that part (but at the same time to reduce it to what appears to me its just value) I must observe that two things have contributed to give it a rich effect at a distance, as well as a varied and dressed look within itself; in both respects a very different one from his other plantations. In the first place, there were several old trees there before he began his works; and their high and spreading tops would unavoidably prevent that dead flat-

ness of outline, *cet air ecrasè*, which his own close * lumpy plantations of trees always

* It may perhaps be thought unjust to make Mr. Brown answerable for the neglect of gardeners; it may be said, that an improver's business is to *form*, not to *thin* plantations. But a physician would deserve very ill of his patient, who, after prescribing for the moment, should abandon him to the care of his nurse; and who in his future visits should concern himself no farther, but let the disorder take its course, till the patient was irrecoverably emaciated and exhausted. Mr. Brown, during a long practice, frequently repeated his visits; but as far as I have observed, the trees in his plantations bear no mark of his attention: indeed, his clumps strongly prove his love of compactness. There is another circumstance in his plantations that deserves to be remarked: A favourite mixture of his was that of beech and Scotch firs, and in nearly equal proportion: if unity and simplicity of character in a wood is to be given up, it should be for the sake of a variety that will harmonize; which *two* trees, so equal in size and in numbers, and so strongly contrasted in form and colour, can never do.

This puts me in mind of an anecdote I heard of a person very much used to look at objects with a painter's eye:—He had three cows; when his wife with a very proper œconomy observed, that two were quite sufficient for their family, and desired him to part with one of them. “Lord, my dear,” said he, “*two* cows you know will never group.”

A third

ways exhibit. In the next place, the situation of this spot called for a large proportion of shrubs, with exotick trees of various heights ; these shrubs and plants of lower growth, though chiefly put in clumps, the edgy borders of which have a degree of formality *, yet being subordinate, and
not

A third tree (like a third cow) might have connected and blended the discordant forms and colours of the beech and Scotch fir ; but every thing I have seen of Mr. Brown's works have convinced me that he had, in a figurative sense, no eye ; and if he had had none in the literal sense, it would have only been a private misfortune,

And partial evil, universal good.

* All such *edges* are no less adverse to the beautiful than to the picturesque: they are hard, cutting, and formal; they destroy all play of outline—all beauty of intricacy. Digging, with the edges it occasions, is a blemish, which is endured at first (and with great reason) for the sake of luxuriant vegetation ; but when the end is answered, why continue the blemish ? No one, I believe, would think it right to dig a circle or an oval, and keep its edges pared, round a group of *kalmeas*, *azaleas*, *rhododendrons*, &c. that grew luxuriantly in their own natural soil and climate, in order to make the whole look more beautiful. Why then continue to

not interfering with the higher growths, or with the original trees, have, from the opposite bank, the appearance of a rich underwood ; and the beauty, and comparative variety of that garden scene, from all points, are strongly in favour of the method of planting I described in a former part. It is clear to me, however, that Mr. Brown did not make use of this method from principle ; for in that case he would sometimes at least have tried it in less polished scenes, by substituting thorns, hollies, &c. in the place of shrubs. Of the rich, airy, and even dressed effect of such mixtures, he must have seen numberless examples in forests, in parks, on the banks of rivers ; and from them he might have drawn the most useful instruction, were it to be expected that those who profess to

Dig round them in this country, after they have begun to grow as freely as our own plants ? Why not suffer them to appear, without the marks of culture,

As glowing in their *native* bed ?

improve

improve nature should ever deign to become her scholars.

But to judge properly of Mr. Brown's taste and invention in the accompaniments of water, we must observe those he has formed *entirely* himself, and *that* we may do without quitting Blenheim *; for below the cascade all is his own, and a more complete piece of monotony could hardly be furnished even from his own works. When he was no longer among shrubs

* As Blenheim is the only place I have criticised by name, an apology is due to the noble possessor of it (to whom, on many accounts, I should be particularly sorry to give offence) for the freedom I have taken. I trust, however, that the liberality of mind, which naturally accompanies that love and knowledge of the fine arts for which he is so distinguished, will make him feel that in criticising modern gardening it would have been unfair to Mr. Brown not to have mentioned his most famous work; and that my silence on that head would have been attributed to other motives than those of delicacy and respect. I must also add in my defence, that I can hardly look upon Blenheim in the light of common private property; it has the glorious and singular distinction of being a national reward for great national services; and the public has a more than common interest in all that concerns so noble a monument.

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and gravel walks, the gardener was quite at a loss; his mind having never been prepared, by a study of the great masters of landscape, for a more enlarged one of nature; finding no invention, no resources within himself, he copied what he had most seen and most admired—his own little works; and in the same spirit in which he had magnified a parterre, he planned a gigantic gravel walk; when it was dug out, he filled it with another element, called it a river, and thought the noblest in this kingdom must be jealous of such a rival*.

* Mr. Brown and his followers are great œconomists of their invention: with them walks, roads, brooks, and rivers are, as it were, convertible works—dry one of their rivers, it is a large walk or road—flood a walk or a road, it is a little brook or river—and the accompaniments (like the drone of a bagpipe) always remain the same.

A brook, indeed, is not always dammed up; it sometimes (though rarely) is allowed its liberty; but, like animals that are suffered by the owner to run loose, it is marked as private property, by being mutilated. No operation in improvement has such an appearance of barbarity as that of destroying the modest retired character

factor of a brook : I remember some burlesque lines on the treatment of Regulus by the Carthaginians, which perfectly describe the effect of that operation :

His eyelids they pared,

Good God ! how he stared !

Just so do these improvers torture a brook by widening it, cutting away its beautiful fringe, and exposing it to day's garish eye.

If, instead of always turning them into regular pieces of water, brooks were sometimes stopped *partially*, and to different degrees of height, where there appeared to be natural beds, and where natural banks with trees or with thickets, would then hang over them ; there would be a mixture and succession of still and of running-water ; of quick motion, and of clear reflection.

I HAVE

I HAVE now gone through the principal points of modern gardening; but the observations I have made relate almost entirely to the *grounds*, and not to what may properly be called the *garden* *. The embellishments near the house, and those decorations which would best accord with architecture, and with buildings of every kind, deserve a separate chapter; and some future time I may possibly attempt it, should this work be received favourably.

As the art of gardening, in its extended sense, vies with that of painting, and has been thought likely to form a new school of painters; I think I am justified in hav-

* A gentleman, whose taste and feeling, both for art and nature, rank as high as any man's, was lamenting to me the *extent* of Mr. Brown's operations;—"Former improvers," said he, "at least kept near the house, but this fellow crawls like a snail all over the grounds, and leaves his cursed slime behind him wherever he goes."

ing compared its operations and effects with those of the art it pretends to rival, nay, to instruct. These two rivals (whom I am so desirous of reconciling) have hitherto been guided by very opposite principles, and the character of their productions have been as opposite ; but the cold flat monotony of the new favourite has been preferred by many (" aye, and those great ones too") to the spirited variety of her elder sister ; she has, indeed, been so puffed up by this high favour, that she has hardly deigned to acknowledge the relationship, and has even treated her with contempt : Those also, who from their situation and influence were best qualified to have brought about an union between them, have, on the contrary, contributed to keep up her vanity, and to widen the breach ; for I have heard an eminent professor treat the idea of judging, in any degree, of places as of pictures, or of comparing them at all together, as quite absurd. In real life the noblest part a man can act—
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the part that most conciliates the esteem and good will of all mankind, is that of promoting union and harmony wherever occasion offers: In the present case, though a breach between these figurative persons is not of serious consequence to society, yet I shall feel no small pleasure and pride if my endeavours should be successful. I have shewn, to the best of my power, how much it is their mutual interest to act cordially together, and have offered every motive for such an union; and I hope that prejudices, however strongly rooted—however enforced by those who may be interested in the separation, will at last give way. I may, perhaps, be thought somewhat caustick for a peace-maker, and, I must own,

“ My zeal flows warm and eager from my bosom.”

But if war is to be made for the sake of peace (however the wisdom of the expedient may be doubted) all will agree that it ought to be prosecuted with vigour if once begun.

I never

I never was in company with Mr. Brown, nor even knew him by sight, and therefore can have no personal dislike to him; but I have heard numberless instances of his arrogance and despotism, and such high pretensions seem to me little justified by his works. Arrogance and imperious manners, which, even joined to the truest merit and the most splendid talents, create disgust and opposition, when they are the offspring of a little narrow mind, elated with temporary favour, provoke ridicule, and deserve to meet with it.

Mr. Mason's poem on Modern Gardening, is, in reality, as direct an attack on Mr. Brown's system as what I have written; he has as strongly guarded the reader against the insipid formality of clumps, &c. and has equally recommended the study of painting as the best guide to improvers; but the praise he has bestowed on Mr. Brown himself (however *generally* conveyed) has spoiled the effect
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of so powerful an antidote. Most people, from natural indolence, are more inclined to copy an established and approved practice, than to correct its defects, or to form a new one from theory ; Mr. Mason's eulogium has therefore sanctioned Mr. Brown's practice more effectually, than his precepts have guarded against it. That eulogium, however (if I may be allowed to make a suggestion which I think is authorized by the tenor of the poem) has been given from the most amiable motive—the fear of hurting the feelings of those with whom he was on a footing of friendship ; with whom he often resided ; and who had very much employed and admired Mr. Brown : Silence would in such a work have been a tacit condemnation ; still worse to have “ damned with *faint* praise : ” my idea may possibly be taken upon wrong grounds, but I have often admired Mr. Mason's address in so delicate a situation. Had Mr. Brown transfused into his works any thing of the taste and
spirit

spirit which prevail in Mr. Maſon's precepts and deſcriptions, he would have deſerved (and might poſſibly have enjoyed) the high honour of having thoſe works celebrated by him and Mr. Walpole; and not have had them referred, as they have been by both, to future poets and hiſtorians.

It may perhaps be thought preſumptuous in an individual, who has never diſtinguiſhed himſelf by any work that might give authority to his opinion, ſo boldly to condemn what has been admired and practiſed by men of the moſt liberal taſte and education; but the force of faſhion and example are well known, and it requires no little energy of mind, and confidence in one's own principles, to think and act for one's ſelf, in oppoſition to general opinion and practice. Some French writer (I do not recollect who) ventures to expreſs a doubt, whether a tree waving in the wind with all its branches free and untouched, may not poſſibly be

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an object more worthy of admiration than one cut into form in the gardens of Versailles:—This bold sceptic in theory had most probably his trees shorn like those of his sovereign.

It is equally probable that many an English gentleman has felt deep regret when Mr. Brown had improved some charming trout stream into a piece of water; and that many a time afterwards, when walking on its naked banks, and disgusted with its glare and formality, he has thought how beautifully fringed those of his little brook once had been; how it sometimes ran rapidly over the stones and shallows; and sometimes in a narrower channel stole silently beneath the overhanging boughs. Many rich natural groups of trees he might remember,—now thinned and rounded into clumps; many sequestered and shady spots which he had loved when a boy,—now all open and exposed, without shade or variety; and all these sacrifices made, not to his own, but

but to the taste of the day, and against his natural feelings.

It seems to me that there is something of patriotism in the praises Mr. Walpole and Mr. Mason have bestowed on English gardening; and that zeal for the honour of their country has made them, in the *general* view of the subject, overlook defects which they have themselves condemned. My love for my country is, I trust, not less ardent than theirs, but it has taken a different turn; and I feel anxious to free it from the disgrace of propagating a system, which, should it become universal, would disfigure the face of all Europe. I wish a more liberal and extended idea of improvement to prevail; that instead of the narrow, mechanical practice of a few English gardeners,—the noble and varied works of the eminent painters of every age and of every country, and those of their supreme mistress, Nature, should be the great models of imitation.

If a taste for drawing and painting, and a knowledge of their principles, made a part of every gentleman's education; if instead of hiring a professed improver to torture their grounds after an established model, each improved his own place according to general conceptions drawn from nature and pictures, or from hints favourite masters in painting, or favourite parts of nature suggested to him,—there might in time be a great variety in the styles of improvement, and all of them with peculiar excellencies. No two painters ever saw nature with the same eyes; they tended to one point by a thousand different routes, and that makes the charm of an acquaintance with their various modes of conception and execution; but any of Mr. Brown's followers might say, with great truth, we have but one idea among us.

I have always understood that Mr. Hamilton, who created Painshill, not only had studied pictures, but had studied them for the express purpose of improving real landscape.

landscape. The place he created (a task of quite another difficulty from correcting, or from adding to natural scenery) fully proves the use of such a study. Among many circumstances of more striking effect, I was highly pleased with a walk which leads through a bottom skirted with wood; and I was pleased with it, not from what *had*, but from what had *not*, been done; it had no edges, no borders, no distinct lines of separation; nothing was done except keeping the ground properly neat, and the communication free from any obstruction; the eye and the footsteps were equally unconfined, and if it is a high commendation to a writer or a painter, that he knows when to leave off, it is not less so to an improver.

In a place begun (I believe) by Kent, and finished by Brown, a wood with many old trees covered with ivy, mixed with thickets of hollies, yews, and thorns; a wood which Rousseau might have dedicated *a la reverie*,—is so intersected by

walks and green alleys, all edged and bordered, that there is no escaping from them; they act like flappers in Laputa, and instantly wake you from any dream of retirement. The borders of these walks (and it is a very common case) are so thick, and the rest of the wood so rough and impracticable, that it seems as if the improver said, "You shall never wander from my walks — never exercise your own taste and judgment — never form your own compositions; neither your eyes nor your feet shall be allowed to stray from the boundaries I have traced"—a species of thralldom unfit for a free country.

There is, indeed, something despotic in the general system of improvement; all must be laid open—all that obstructs, levelled to the ground—houses, orchards, gardens, all swept away. *Painting*, on the contrary, tends to humanize the mind: where a despot thinks every person an intruder who enters his domain, and wishes to destroy cottages and pathways, and to reign alone;
the

the lover of painting considers the dwellings, the inhabitants, and the marks of their intercourse as ornaments to the landscape *.

For the honour of humanity there *are* minds which require no other motive than what passes within. And here I cannot resist paying a tribute to the memory of a beloved uncle, and recording a benevolence towards all the inhabitants around him that struck me from my earliest remembrance; and it is an impression I wish always to cherish. It seemed as if he had made his extensive walks as much for them as for himself; they used them as

* Sir Joshua Reynolds told me, that when he and Wilson the landscape painter were looking at the view from Richmond terrace, Wilson was pointing out some particular part, and in order to direct his eye to it, "There," said he, "near those houses—there! where the *figures* are."—Though a painter, said Sir Joshua, I was puzzled; I thought he meant statues, and was looking upon the *tops* of the houses, for I did not at first conceive that the men and women we plainly saw walking about, were by him only thought of as figures in the landscape.

freely, and *their* enjoyment was *his*. The village bore as strong marks of his and of his brother's attentions (for in that respect they appeared to have but one mind) to the comforts and pleasures of its inhabitants. Such attentive kindnesſes are amply repaid by affectionate regard and reverence, and were they general throughout the kingdom, they would do much more towards guarding us againſt democratical opinions,

“ Than twenty thouſand ſoldiers arm'd in proof.”

The cheerfulneſs of the ſcene I have mentioned, and all the intereſting circumſtances attending it (ſo different from thoſe of ſolitary grandeur) have convinced me, that he who deſtroys dwellings, gardens, and incloſures for the ſake of mere extent and parade of property, only extends the bounds of monotony, and of dreary, ſelfiſh pride; but contracts thoſe of variety, amuſement, and humanity.

I own it does ſurpriſe me, that in an age
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and in a country where the arts are so highly cultivated, one single plan (and that but moderate) should have been so generally adopted ; and that even the love of peculiarity should not sometimes have checked this method of levelling all distinctions, of making all places alike *, all equally tame and insipid.

Few persons have been so lucky as never to have seen or heard the true *proser* ; smiling, and distinctly uttering his flowing common-place nothings, with the same placid countenance, the same even-toned voice : he is the very emblem of serpentine walks, belts, and rivers, and all Mr. Brown's works ; like him they are smooth, flowing, even, and distinct †, and like him they wear one's soul out.

There

* A person well known for his taste and abilities being at a gentleman's house where Mr. Brown was expected, drew a plan by anticipation, which proved so exact, that I believe the ridicule it threw on the serious plan helped to prevent its execution.

† The language (if it may be so called) by which objects of sight make themselves intelligible, is exactly
like

There is a very different and much rarer being, and who hardly appears to be of the same species; full of unexpected turns,—of flashes of light: objects the most familiar are placed by him in such singular yet natural points of view,—he strikes out such unthought of agreements

like that of speech. To a man who is used to look at nature, pictures, or drawings with a painter's eye, the slightest hint, on the slightest inspection, conveys a perfect and intelligible meaning; just as the slightest sound, with the most negligent articulation, conveys meaning to an ear that is well acquainted with the language of the speaker: But to a person little versed in that language such a sound is quite unintelligible; he must have every word pronounced distinctly and articulately.

Then again, as these slight hints, and slurred articulations, have often a grace and spirit in language which is lost when words are distinctly pronounced; so many of these slight and expressive touches, both in art and in nature, give most pleasure to those who are thoroughly versed in the language. This may perhaps in some degree account for the plainly marked distinctions in improvement; for as in order to convey any idea to a man unused to a language in *one* sense, you must mark every word; so to a man unused to it in *another* sense you must mark every *object*; must cut sharp lines, must whiten, redden, blacken, &c. &c.

and

and contrasts,—such combinations, so little obvious, yet never forced or affected, that the attention cannot flag; but from the delight of what is passed, we eagerly listen for what is to come. This is the true picturesque, and the propriety of that term will be more felt if we attend to what corresponds to the *beautiful* in conversation. How different is the effect of that soft insinuating style, of those gentle transitions, which, without dazzling or surprising, keep up an increasing interest, and insensibly wind round the heart.

It requires a mind of some sensibility and habit of observation to distinguish what is really beautiful and interesting, from what is merely smooth, flowing, and insipid, and to give a decided preference to the former; it is not more common to have a true relish for picturesque scenery, and even the quick turns and intricacies of conversation are not relished by all. I have sometimes seen a *proser* quite forlorn in the company of a man of brilliant imagination;

imagination; he seemed "dazzled with
 "excess of light," and his dull faculties
 totally unable to keep pace with him:
 I have afterwards observed the same man,
 get close to a brother proser, and the
 two snails have travelled on so comforta-
 bly on their own slime, that they seemed
 to feel no more impression, either of plea-
 sure or envy, from what they had heard,
 than a real snail may be supposed to do
 at the active bounds and leaps of a stag
 or a high-mettled courser.

This is exactly the case with that prac-
 tical proser the true improver: carry
 him to a scene merely picturesque, he is
 bewildered with its variety and intricacy,
 the charms of which he neither relishes
 nor comprehends; and longs to be crawl-
 ing among his clumps, and debating about
 the tenth part of an inch in the turn of a
 gravel walk. The mass of improvers seem
 to forget that we are distinguished from
 other animals, by being (as Milton de-
 scribes it)

"Nobler

“ Nobler far, of look *erst*;
they go about

“ With leaden eye that loves the ground,”

and are so continually occupied with turns and sweeps, and manœuvring stakes, that they never gain an idea of the first elements of composition.

Such a mechanical system of operations little deserves the name of an art. There are indeed certain words in all languages that have a good and a bad sense, such as *simplicity* and *simple*, *art* and *artful*, which as often express our contempt as our admiration. It seems to me that whenever art, with regard to plan or disposition, is used in a good sense, it means to convey an idea of some degree of invention,—of contrivance that is not obvious,—of something that raises expectation,—which differs, and with success, from what we recollect having seen before. With regard to improving, that alone I should call art in a good sense which was employed in collecting from the infinite varieties of *accident*

eident (which is commonly called *nature*, in opposition to what is called *art*) such circumstances as may happily be introduced, according to the *real* capabilities of the place to be improved. This is what painters have done in their art, and thence it is, that many of these lucky accidents, being strongly pointed out by them, are called picturesque.

He therefore, in my mind, will shew most art in improving, who *leaves* (a very material point) or who creates the greatest variety of *pictures*,—of such different compositions as painters will least wish to alter: Not he who begins his work by general clearing and smoothing; that is, by destroying all those accidents, of which such advantages might have been made, but which afterwards the most enlightened and experienced art can never hope to restore.

When I hear how much has been done by art in a place of large extent,—in no one part of which, where that art had been

busy, a painter would take out his sketch book; when I see the sickening display of that art, such as it is, and the total want of effect; I am tempted to reverse the sense of that famous line of Tasso, and to say of such performances:

L'arte che *nulla* fa, tutta si scuopre *.

* No line is more generally known, than

L'arte che tutta fa nulla si scuopre;

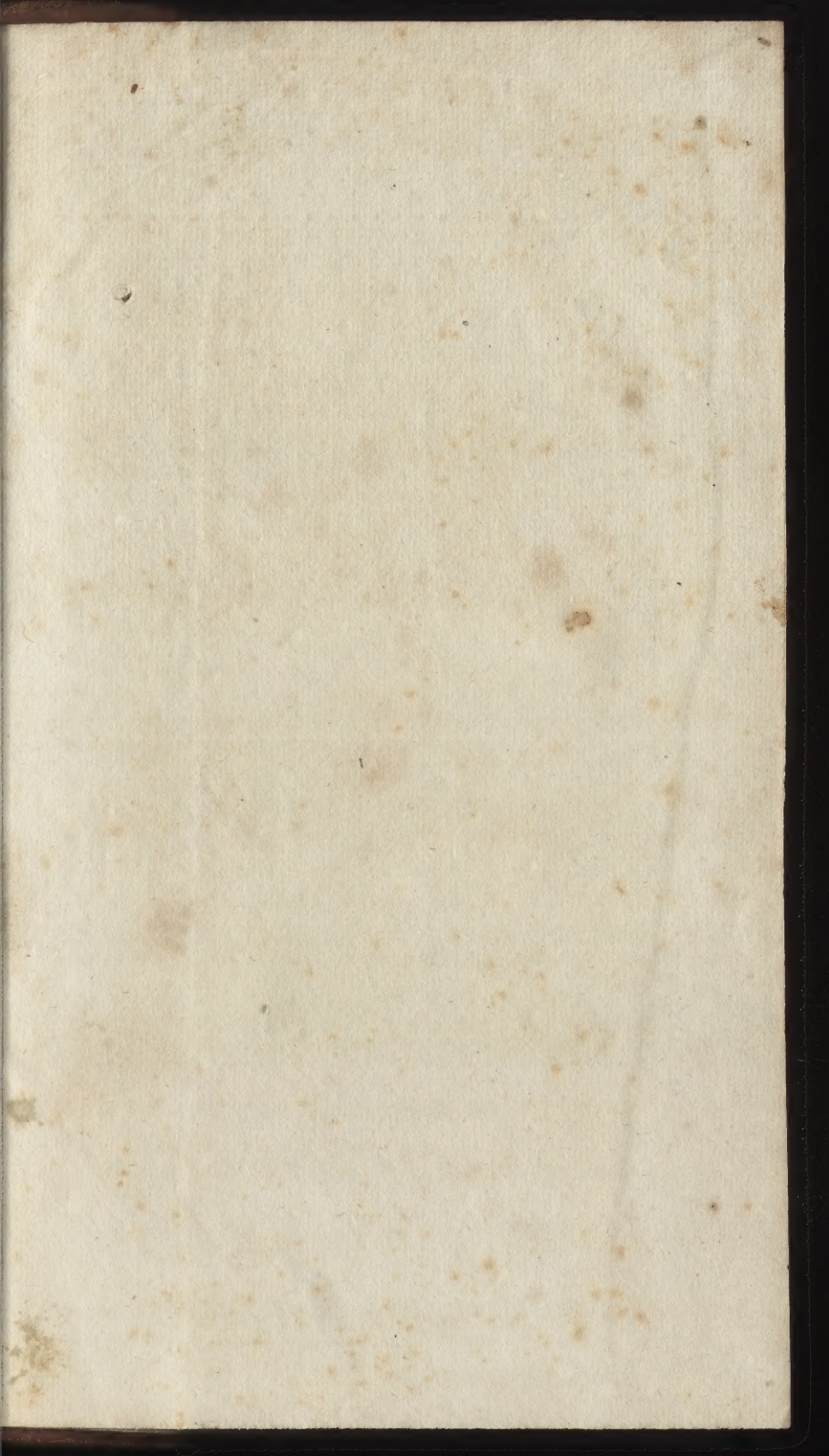
and no precept more universally received; yet still it must not be too strictly followed in all cases.

Near the house artificial scenery ought to have place in proportion to the style and character of the building; and one great defect of modern gardens (in the confined sense of the word) is an affectation of simplicity, and what is called nature; *that* easily degenerates into a plainness (to say no more) which does not accord with the richness and splendour of architectural ornaments. In other parts the precept should have its full effect, and the improver should conceal himself, like a judicious author, who sets his readers imagination at work, while he seems not to be guiding, but to be exploring new regions with him.

In the same manner, the improver should facilitate the means of getting at the most striking parts, but seldom force the spectator to one single route,—to one single point; and if possible even conceal that he has made

made any walk at all. There is in our nature a repugnance to despotism even in trifles; and we are never so heartily pleased as when we fancy ourselves unguided and unconstrained, and that we have made the discovery ourselves. Homer rarely appears in his own person. Fielding does, and sometimes ostentatiously: amidst all his beauties (and no writer has more); it is a striking defect.

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